IN DEFENCE OF

THE PARTY

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PREFACE

This brochure contains a series of articles contributed by the writer to the columns of the '*Hindu*' and '*Justice*' in reply to a criticism of the Non-Brahmin Ministry and party, by an 'Experienced Journalist' the columns of the '*Hindu*'. The writer is aware of his limitations and is conscious that an abler-defence could have been put up by others better fitted than himself for such a task. It is hoped, however, that this will stimulate the reader to take a greater interest in the work of the Party.

The second part of the brochure contains three lectures delivered by Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar which are incorporated herein as they give some idea of the constructive work of the Ministerial Party in the local council.

An M. L. C.

Madras Ministry's Record.

"PUBLICIST'S" REVIEW,

MINISTERIALIST'S DEFENCE.

CHAPTER 1.

MALABAR AND MARTIAL LAW.

The series of articles, of which the first two appeared in our columns on the 5th and 12th instants surveying the Ministry's three years' record, contributed by "an Experienced Publicist", has provoked a reply from the Party in power.

The following is the first portion of the reply which a prominent member of the Party has sent to us for publication under the nom-de-plume of "an M. L. C." :—*The Hindu*.

I was glad to read in the columns of your issue of the 5th instant a survey of Ministerial record and of the party in power by an 'experienced publicist.' To the best of my recollection this is the first serious attempt made by any publicist to criticise, I shall not say in an unbiassed manner, but to criticise in a detailed manner the work of the party, to canvass its decisions and to estimate the worth of the principles which it has stood and fought for. Hitherto the party has always had criticisms levelled against it in a vague and general way so that it was impossible for any party-man to meet such criticisms or to reply to them. It is easy to allege of any party that it is not progressive, that it does not fight for political progress, that by its conduct it has not helped to broaden the basis of political liberty and to enlarge the rights of individuals and of communities, to level the charge of conservativeness of die-hardism and of promoting vested

interests at the expense of the proletariat, and it is impossible to meet such charges except by placing the general record of the party before the country. I therefore welcome your publicist's criticism because he has tried not to make these indefinite attacks but to concentrate the attention on specific instances where, according to him, the party has failed. It shall be my endeavour in this and subsequent articles to meet the criticism of your correspondent in the same detailed way in which he has attempted to make it, and if you could further extend the hospitality of your columns—I am conscious I cannot claim it as of right—I shall attempt to give your readers a survey of the Ministerial record from the point of view of a humble camp-follower in the party.

I must at the very outset enter a caveat against the position taken up by your correspondent that the party had the power to shape the decision of the Government according to their wishes. Every tyro in politics knows, and I believe your correspondent will himself admit, that this is true only in a limited sense and under the system of reformed government under which we are functioning at present it is not always possible for the party, however unanimous its opinion may be, to shape the decisions of the Government on some matters at least relating to what are termed the reserved departments.

ARREST OF MR. YAKUB HASSAN.

The first serious charge levelled against the party is that by its attitude in connection with the arrest of Mr. Yakub Hassan, it has proved that it has no consideration for the liberty of the subject or the right of public meeting. I am afraid that your correspondent could have chosen no more unfortunate example than this. The subsequent events in Malabar, the ghastly reign of terror there, the enormities that were committed on the Hindu population, all proved that in that particular instance at least the attitude of the leader Sir Pitty was certainly the proper attitude, and his very statements have been proved to be prophetically true.

"The fire is there, the dynamite is there and nobody can deny that. Well, the only question is who will set fire to it? My friend Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar thinks that unless there is a disturbance we cannot say there is a possibility. A wise man will say, 'Take care, be careful, don't allow things to go to such extreme.'" Is it possible for anyone, now that history has recorded how necessary the warning was, to say that this attitude was unjustified? Political memories are notoriously short but even our politicians cannot so easily ignore the tragedy of Malabar with its grim horrors even to-day presenting themselves to the casual visitor. Your correspondent says that the attitude of Sir Pitty was that of a conservative of the die-hard type. If by 'conservative' is meant one who foresees the future and gives to the opposition anxious to strike a pose for cheap glorification a warning of the fate to come, I hope for the good of the country India will produce some more conservatives of his type.

A COMPARISON.

Let us however compare his attitude with that of a glorious liberal probably one of the leaders of the party to which your experienced publicist belongs, the leader of the Liberal party in the Legislative Assembly, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer on an analogous adjournment motion when the same right of public meeting was under consideration. A public open air meeting was to have been held on the 23rd March, 1922 at Delhi to consider the Khilafat question in relation to the Paris Conference and to make representations to the British delegates in Paris. The requisition for the meeting was very largely signed by many leading influential men, no less than 22 members of the Indian legislature having subscribed to it. Among other signatories were Colonel Sir Umar Hyat Khan, than whom there is no stauncher supporter of the Government, Sir Zulifiquar Khan, Raja Ikramuliah Khan and several other titled gentlemen. In the words of the Honourable Saiyad Raza Ali the convener "the President of the meeting was a well-known public man of moderate views Mr. T V. Seshagiri Iyer, a retired High

Court Judge.' This meeting was prohibited by the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi a province which is under the direct control of the Government of India. In the debate on a motion for adjournment to discuss this order of the Deputy Commissioner Sir Sivaswami Iyer spoke and voted against the motion on two grounds, first that a Government cannot be censured for the mistake, if any, of its subordinates, and secondly that the Deputy Commissioner was not acting malafide in this case. To quote his very words: "He (the Deputy Commissioner) thought that with the responsibility of keeping the peace, he could not afford to take the risk of allowing the meeting to be held in the open air. He may be right or wrong. But does his conduct show any wanton or arbitrary interference with our liberties? Are you entitled to say, looking at the conduct of the Deputy Commissioner and at the circumstance and previous history of public meetings in Delhi, that he exercised his judgment in a manner so arbitrary, so unreasonable, that no person gifted with ordinary common sense would have come to that conclusion or that he acted otherwise than bonafide, that his object was to interfere with the liberties of the people and that he did not intend to preserve the peace. For my part, Sir, whatever error of judgment the Deputy Commissioner may have been guilty of I am inclined to hold that it certainly is not a case of a wanton and deliberate disregard of rights, or conduct which would amount to malafides on his part. If a public servant acts to the best of his lights in an honest manner, are you to censure him for having made a mistake. If that is the principle, then I am afraid the position of public servants will become intolerable." No apology is, I feel, required for this fairly long extract. Here is a brilliant exposition of the right of public meeting by one of the foremost politicians and lawyers of the day, a pillar of liberalism and the defender of the right of India at the League of Nations. It must be admitted by the Non-Brahmins that neither they nor their leader Sir Chettiar, the 'die-hard conservative' have found themselves capable of soaring to such great heights of political wisdom.

MALABAR TROUBLES.

The next charge levelled against the party by your esteemed correspondent relates to the attitude of the party during the Malabar rebellion. The party is accused of not having made any attempt at diagnosing the causes which led to the rebellion nor investigating the way in which Martial Law was being worked there. It must, however, be remembered that in discussing the conduct of the party with regard to the particularly unhappy rebellion our knowledge derived long after the rebellion had subsided of facts and incidents, should not be used to cloud our judgment on contemporaneous conduct. Your correspondent himself admits that if no member of the party raised a debate on the Malabar rebellion neither did any member of the opposition—the opposition whose duty it always is to point out the weakness of an erring Government and to take advantage of and use to the fullest extent the blunders of the administration.

That is a most significant fact which cannot be lost sight of in the discussion of the question, for it throws a flood of light on the attitude of all persons concerned with regard to this question at the time when the horrors were a matter of daily occurrence in Malabar.

Malabar sends three Hindu members to the Legislative Council, two representing the general mass of the district and one the landlord class. It also sends two Mahomedan members to the Council both of whom are Moplahs. It is not a little curious that not one of these five gentlemen representing various interests, Hindu and Mahomedan, ever raised any discussion on the subject in the Council, and when we remember that it was Mr. Krishnan Nair that made the adjournment motion regarding the arrest of Yakub Hassan, one is forced to the irresistable conclusion that it was not merely a coincidence but a fact pregnant with meaning that even he did not raise a debate on the Malabar rebellion. The truth is that expost facto arguments cannot get rid of the fact that Hindu and Mahomedan, party men and non-party men

alike felt that it was not in the best interests of the public to raise any discussion on this question. The trouble though a very great and serious one was after all a localised trouble, and if the members of the locality belonging to both the communities affected thought it wise and prudent not to raise a discussion on the question, I ask if members who had no direct concern with it who were not affected by it would have felt themselves justified in raising a discussion which probably would have lead to acrimonious racial controversy and antagonism.

But the record of the Legislative Council takes us a step further than this negative aspect of the case. When in a side issue this question was raised what was the attitude of the representatives of the district. In the budget debate of 1922 on a token motion for reduction of the allotment for gaols by Rs. 100 the question of Moplah prisoners was raised and in reply to the question what the Government intended to do with a large number of Moplah prisoners under trial and in gaol, the Hon. the Law Member who was then in charge of the Jail Department replied that it was likely that a certain number of these prisoners would be let out on conditions. The debate then turned on the desirability and the wisdom of such a step. Dewan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nair representing the district of Malabar said: "We the people in Malabar seriously object to the releasing of Moplah prisoners who have been sent to gaol on conviction. My friend the Hon. Law Member and my friend Mr. Ramachandra Rao talk in an airy and light hearted manner about the releasing of these Moplah prisoners. A large and influentially signed memorial has been sent to the Government of India and probably to this Government also referring to the danger of releasing Moplah prisoners who have taken part in this serious rebellion and who have been convicted by the Summary Courts to two years' imprisonment. I do not know whether my friends realise the consequences of releasing these prisoners before their period of imprisonment has run out. In fact my friend opposite knows or

ought to know that the rebellion has not yet completely been suppressed. I may tell him from my own knowledge that if before the rebellion is completely suppressed these prisoners are released even on conditions the consequences will be very serious. The rebellion is likely to be prolonged if these prisoners are released. The feeling in Malabar is very strong. We are not at all against humane treatment of these Moplah prisoners, but I must give a serious warning, and we are against the release of these prisoners convicted by Courts of Law"

Mr. Prabhakaran Tampan representing the Jenmis was equally strong and stated that it was very easy to sit there and speak light heartedly that they might be released, but if they should be let, they should be sent to the district from which Mr. Ramachandra Rao came. That was the sort of feeling that pervaded the representative of the district who after all had the dominant voice on this question, and it need only be pointed out that neither of the Moplah representatives had anything to say against the position taken up by Mr. Krishnan Nair though they were present on the occasion.

MARTIAL LAW REGIME.

A great deal is now made of the "exposures" of Martial Law administration by Mr. Manjeri Rama Iyer, but one has only to point out that these exposures began only in March of this year and that till then there was never any definite statement made anywhere alleging that Martial Law administration was not properly conducted or that police excesses were the order of the day. Even general and vague accusations of that sort began to appear in the press only towards the latter part of last year. As regards Mr. Manjeri Ramier's attacks one has only to be reminded that it was this very gentleman who was a member of the committee that sat to consider the first serious blot in the Malabar administration, the great horror of the Moplah Train Tragedy and the conclusions that were arrived at by this gentleman as a member of that committee put him out of Court at once and for

ever as a person who can be depended upon for fighting for popular rights and popular liberties. But of this more anon.

Let us again see what the protagonists of the Nationalist Party, the pillars of liberty and freedom, the fighters for popular advancement and popular rights had to say on the subject. We quoted one illustrious example with regard to the last charge, and we shall quote another more illustrious one with regard to the present. The Hon'ble Mr. T. Rangachariar is the leader of the Democratic party and the great champion of the cause of the people. On the 5th of September 1921 in the Legislative Assembly Mr. Rangachariar moved for the adjournment of the House to discuss the Moplah outbreaks. A few extracts from his speech will throw a flood of light on his diagnosis of the situation and his ideas as regards the origin of the outbreak. Mr. Rangachariar begins his speech in his own supposed humourous way by explaining the derivation of the word Moplah as coming from 'Ma' and 'Pillah' mother's child. Here is an extract from what he says: "Ernad is one of the Taluks which is famous for the Moplahs and it is a proverbial expression with us in South India if you want to mention a man who merely provokes a quarrel unnecessarily you have to mention a Kundote Moplah or an Iyampet Mussalman. That is the way in which persons merely for the sake of quarrels will provoke a quarrel without any cause whatever That is the way in which we characterise such persons. Now Sir, they are an inflammable lot, and I am sure that the Khilafat agitation for the last two or three years has been the main cause of the present condition of things in Malabar, and I am not sure that the Government of India and the Home Government are not in a measure responsible for the encouragement by shilly-shallying and dilly-dallying with the agitation." So far as regards the origin; now what does the Hon'ble Mr. Rangachariar suggest as to the remedies to put down this agitation? Let me again quote his very words: "The situation is really very grave. My main point in bringing forward this discussion is to give expression to the

feeling that the Government of India have acted wisely in introducing Martial Law to protect the people there, otherwise the situation would have been very serious indeed."

THE TRAIN TRAGEDY.

The next charge that is levelled against the Party-in-power is with regard to its attitude in that repetition of the Black Hole Tragedy, the train disaster. I am afraid again that your esteemed publicist could not have chosen a worse case for attempting to criticise the party's conduct in these matters. It may probably surprise him to learn that the party has behaved in a way which reflects the utmost credit on itself in this matter, shows it up as a humane and at the same time as an independent party, one which has the greatest concern for the masses and one which is willing to show its large heartedness and its fearlessness on occasions like this. I wish I could say the same thing of parties who boast of their liberalism and of men who stand out as the very champions of big rights. Your esteemed correspondent quotes very largely from the speech of Mr. Shunmugam Chettiar on the adjournment motion which itself proves that at least one member of the party was willing to call a spade a spade and was not afraid to criticise the Government? What happened after the appointment of the Committee. I have already referred to Mr. Manjeri Ramier, one of the members of the Committee, who was a Home Ruler when the tearing and raging propaganda of Mrs. Besant was being carried out, who in the days of Home Rule flags and Home Rule demonstrations stood as one of the great west coast disciples of Mrs. Besant for fighting for the freedom of the country and whose party had the greatest contempt for the conservative and retrograde non-Brahmins. His report could only be called a white-washing report and he exculpated along with other colleagues of his every single individual who was concerned in the tragedy except a poor Sergeant or a few constables. Mr. Evans could not be implicated in this tragedy; the criminal carelessness connected with the arrangements could

not be brought home to Mr. Hitchcock and so every single public official this great Home Rule leader thought was not responsible for the tragedy. The report, it is well-known, was discussed by the Government and thanks to the convention of joint debate between the two parts of the Government which Lord Willingdon has established our ministers had a share also in this discussion. It is an open secret that after a prolonged discussion the ministers were able to convince their colleagues, some at least of them, that some of these high-placed officials were certainly as much responsible as any of these underlings and that though not possibly by the Court of Law certainly in a departmental sense they deserved punishment. It speaks volumes of the independence of these Ministers of the Conservative Party that they were able to lay down their view strongly and clearly and they were able to convince the reserved half of the Government of the soundness of their views. Now a ministerial party is supposed to be taken into confidence by the Ministers on some of these questions and when the fight had been fought out in the Government itself and the Local Government had been converted to the view against the reasoning of the great champions like Mr Manjeri Ramier that punishment had to be meted out elsewhere also, it became a work of supererogation for the Council to take up a discussion of this question and to ventilate its views thereon. That these are not random statements I shall prove by quoting from official records, but I am at present concerned with proving that where the Local Government, which is the only authority that can be influenced by the Legislative Council has taken the right course, a discussion or debate in that Council is unnecessary from a practical point of view though if such a discussion were raised it could have afforded some members an opportunity to strike a heroic pose. Let us consider what happened after this emphatic opinion of the Local Government on this subject. The Government of India immediately and probably because they had a suspicion that the Local Government was not going to be very lenient towards the culprits withdrew the whole case from the hands of the Local Government and took

it on their own hands. This they could do under the Government of India Act of 1919 and when they did so the Local Government was functus officio and the Legislative Council powerless. It was for our members in the Legislative Assembly who did not live in the stifling poisonous communal air of Madras but who revelled in the salubrious high political atmosphere of Delhi and Simla it was for them to take up this question and let us see how they acquitted themselves. Now the discussion in the Assembly on this question was not started by any of the Madras members though the matter intimately related to this province, but that is a small matter. On the 22nd of September, Khan Bahadur Sarfaras Hussain Khan representing Tirhut division moved the following resolution.

"This Assembly recommends to the Governor - General in Council that he may be pleased to take proper action against those officers who are directly or indirectly responsible for the Moplah Train Tragedy at Podanur and are found guilty of meting out ill-treatment to Moplah women and children during the recent disturbances in Malabar."

In the discussion that followed Sir William Vincent while opposing the resolution made the position of the Madras Government clear. He stated that the Madras Government were of opinion differing from the Committee that both Mr. Hitchcock and Mr. Evans were in a measure responsible for the tragedy. His remarks about the Committee are interesting. "Mr. Hitchcock was exonerated by this Committee on which the non-official element was very strong and while I am speaking of the Committee I should be glad if members from Madras would consider in particular the name of one gentleman Mr. Manjeri Ramier who is, as I have said according to my information, a singularly independent person of great capacity." It was left to Mr. Venkatapathi Razu, the only Madrasi, who spoke during the debate to controvert the position that Sir William Vincent took and to prove

to the hilt that some of these officers were responsible and deserved punishment.

The Hon'ble Sir William Vincent took full advantage of this fact and stated "I wish in replying to deal first with the aspersion made by Mr. Sahani on the committee of enquiry, as I think that they do not deserve the condemnation of this House (Hear, hear). Mr. Sahani as seen from his remarks, it appears, has not even read the papers; yet he attacks in a public assembly of this kind the respectable men from Madras, gentlemen of very independent character and of great judgment who sat on this committee and here I would ask this assembly to notice that no one single member from Madras—from Mr. Cotelingam to Mr. Rangachariar—got up to support him in a word that he said.' After that speech the resolution was put to the vote and lost by an overwhelming mojority, 25 having voted for and 52 against. Would it surprise you, sir, I wonder or your experienced journalist if he were to find that among those who voted for the resolution the only two Madrasies were the much maligned Mr. M. K. Reddi and Mr. Venkatapathy Razu, and would it surprise you even more if you find among those who voted against the resolution the Hon'ble T. Rangachariar, Mr. P. Srinivasa Rao and Mr. C. S. Subramanyam, stars of the first magnitude in political liberalism. That, sir, is a short history of this most unfortunate episode and it is for your readers to judge which party, which shade of politics, which class of politicians have been responsible for not bringing the offenders to book.

CHAPTER 2

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT.

The next charge that is levelled against the party is that when the Criminal Law Amendment Act was applied to this province the party did not give an opportunity to Mr. Ramachandra Rao for even a discussion of the question on a motion for adjournment and the action of the

party was strongly criticised by the Press and your correspondent says that the Ministers and the Council were responsible for the extension of the Act. I am willing, Sir, to take full responsibility for the extension of the Act on behalf of the Ministerial party, but does your correspondent realise what the state of Madras was as compared to other provinces? Is he aware, Sir, that the extension of the Criminal Amendment Act is but a preliminary and that by the mere extension of the Act, no steps affecting popular liberty and popular right can be taken by the Government? Is he aware, Sir, that a further notification has to issue before any arrest can be made or any prohibitory order issued? Now the time at which this Amendment Act was extended was one when His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was expected in our midst. The Ministerial party had made their own preparations to combat the activities of the Non-Co-operators and to give a right royal reception to an inheritor of a great name and a great throne. They had organized themselves; they had formed their Volunteers' Corps; they had done everything possible to assure the public that hooliganism could be counter-acted. Now as members of the Ministerial party we had the further assurance from some of the highest men at the helm of affairs that the mere extension of the Criminal Law Amendment Act need not give us any room for anxiety and that in all probability the further notification which had to be issued before the extension could become effective would never be done, that in any case we in the Council or our Ministers would have every opportunity of expressing their views and of judging of the necessity of a further notification before it was actually issued. With such an assurance and with these guarantees it was an absolutely unnecessary thing for the Council to discuss what was merely an academic question whether the Criminal Law Amendment Act by itself could be extended or not. Even so the party might have allowed a discussion of the question but for the curious attitude taken by the leader of the opposition in making his adjournment motion. The leader of the opposition had not the

courtesy to take even a single member of the party into confidence whereas he had given previous notice to the so-called leader of the House Sir Lionel Davidson who heartily assented to the course proposed. The party naturally did not want to be tools in this arrangement between the two leaders to discuss this question which one was anxious to raise and the other equally anxious to meet and it was with a view to teach an object lesson as much to the leader of the Opposition as to the leader of the House that the Ministerial party who had an inkling and this friendly warfare declined to a man to rise and support the adjournment motion. The very fact that even 20 members could not get up must convince every one that the tactics of the leader of the opposition was mainly responsible for the fiasco.

POSITION OF MADRAS UNDER THE ACT.

But to proceed on the necessity of the question itself, I am more than surprised that this should be made a grievance by your esteemed publicist. Are you not aware, Sir, of the fact that in so-called advanced provinces where political activities had reached the highest limit and where public life was supposed to be nobler than here and where the Legislative Councils were not turned into communal factions, men in hundreds and thousands have been marched into prison consequent on the use of exceptional laws like the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Seditious Meetings Act? In Bengal these acts were applied and thousands were sent to gaol and in the United Provinces with the Hon'ble Mr. Chintamani and Jagat Narain as Ministers these acts were applied and thousands again went to gaol, and so was it in Nagpur, so was it in Punjab, so was it in Bombay. But it was left to benighted Madras with its conservative Ministers to form the single exception of a province where neither in those stirring times nor even to this day, these extraordinary laws have been invoked and not a single man has been sent to gaol under these extraordinary provisions. Does it show that the party in power has given room to the executive to forge

the fetters on the masses ? Does it show that the Ministerial party has allowed the Government to use arbitrary powers to thwart public opinion ? Does it show that popular liberty and popular rights have been sacrificed by the party in power? Madras is one of the provinces that stood out as one that scorned to oppress the people with these extraordinary powers. The Ministry in Madras was the first ministry which was able to check the reserved half from resorting into a panic use of these extraordinary draconian powers and yet public life and public morality is so low here, the blinding by communal hatred is so great that we are accused of not having safeguarded popular rights. O tempores! O mores!

SEPARATION OF JUDICIAL AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS.

Your esteemed correspondent charges next the party with two more instances in which the ideals of civil liberty have not been observed by them, and he is no more happy in his choice of illustrations here than he has been hitherto. One instance which shows the party's want of sympathy with the ideal of civil liberty is according to your correspondent the attitude on the question of the separation of judicial and executive functions. I am afraid, Sir, in this connection I cannot altogether much as I should like to treat your correspondent with the greatest respect though differing from him politically, acquit him of all intention to mislead. The proposition to separate executive and judicial functions was brought forward by Mr. Venkataramana Iyengar early in 1921, in fact on the 4th day of the starting of the new Council and was defeated by a large majority. The Legislative Council was prorogued on the 20th April and immediately after many a member of the party himself gave notice of a resolution for the appointment of a Committee to examine the question of the separation of judicial and executive functions and finally the Council unanimously passed a resolution for the appointment of such a Committee. The Committee has now sat and examined various schemes

and submitted its report. Mr. Venkataramana Iyengar was one of the members of the Committee and his report is before the Government. It is for the new Council to force the Government to accept the decisions of the Committee either as they have been arrived at or with such modifications which the Council considers necessary and to give effect to this great ideal of civil liberty, the separation of judicial and executive functions. This record of the Council does not show as if it was against the separation, and I have now to explain why Mr. Venkataramana Iyengar lost his resolution.

Mr. Venkataramana Iyengar's resolution runs as follows :—

"That this Council recommend to the Government that steps should at once be taken to separate executive and judicial functions completely in this presidency and that all judicial officers should be placed directly under the control of the District and Sessions Judges and of the High Court." Your readers will mark the latter portion of the resolution which is a controversial one indeed and which in the excited state of the house at that time over communal representation in the services looked as if it was a back hand attempt by the Hon'ble mover to get round the legitimate desire of the Council by tackling on this proposition to the main resolution which was really of no controversial character. The only speech made by a member of the party explained this position absolutely clearly. Opposing the second part of the resolution Mr. Thanickachalam Chettiar said : "it is a great mistake to entrust the appointment or the transfer or the promotion of officers to them (the District Judges and High Court) and if one goes back one finds that so far as the administrative affairs consisting of the appointment, promotion or transfer of various officers should have been delegated to the High Court are concerned it has not been satisfactory. I am afraid one cannot give credit to the High Court in the matter of distribution of patronages in regard to the apointment of Munsiffs for that even handed justice which is claimed and rightly claimed for the

High Court in regard to the dispensation of justice. For I have before me certain figures which it is not my purpose to mention here in support of this resolution but on a later occasion in support of another resolution which I propose to bring forward" and after reviewing how the High Court has treated the non-Brahmins with regard to appointment of District Munsiffs. Mr. Chettiar wound up by making the position absolutely clear and lucid. 'I oppose the proposition' says Mr. Chettiar in so far as it suggests or recommends that the control of the judicial officers in the mofussil might be placed in the hands of the High Court and in so far as the first proposition is concerned as I said previously it is acceptable on all hands, and how far effect is to be given to it is a matter of finance and not a matter of principle on which any two members of the house are opposed to each other." After this exposition of the attitude of the party I cannot understand how anybody could charge the party with having opposed the principle of the separation of the judicial and executive functions. It was open to the mover or to any of his friends to have amended the resolution by dropping out the later part but that was actually what they were not prepared to do. They were more keen on getting the High Court exercise this power than on getting the separation of judicial and executive functions and that was the reason why the motion was defeated. As regards the question whether the High Court should exercise this power or not the country, at any rate the non-Brahmins, would have but one opinion on the matter and that would endorse the view of the party in the Council,

TREATMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS.

Your correspondent next refers to the non-co-operation movement and the treatment of the political prisoners. I am afraid Sir, that there is a fundamental divergence of views between your correspondent and the party on this question. It is not a matter of humanity; it is not a matter of treating your political opponents with consideration. I may assure your correspondent

and those of his way of thinking that none in the Ministerial party are moved with a spirit of vengeance, that no one among them has got the idea that a political opponent should be deterrently punished and that those who differ from them should be subjected to the pillory. Such has never been the attitude of the non-Brahmins but the whole view point with regard to how the Non-Co-operation movement should be tackled, what steps should be taken to put it down, what its value is to the political life of the country, whether it promotes or retards progress, whether it hastens us to that ultimate goal Dominion Home Rule or whether it impedes us in our progress—these are questions on which it must be admitted that the non-Brahmin party does not see eye to eye with any other party in this presidency. The so-called moderate party if they were to examine its position carefully will be found to be really in secret sympathy with the non-co-operation movement and I have heard it stated by more than one moderate friend of mine that it also serves its own useful purpose and that further without the existence of such a party the moderates could not be shown that respect by the Government which they are now shown ; but the non-Brahmin party unlike the moderate party is a self-contained party and does not like the adventitious helps from political opponents to promote its own political career. It therefore could not sympathise with those gentlemen who sit in the Council as moderates disclaiming any connection with the non-co-operators and at the same time by every act of theirs show that they are sympathetic with them and in some cases afraid of them. If you believe as non-Brahmins honestly do that the non-co-operation movement is doing harm to the country then there was no other alternative than to allow that movement to die; and if you are really of opinion that many a youth in the country is being wheeled away from the right path that his life is ruined, his study spoilt, his career is blasted at the very threshold, do you think you would be acting wisely by preventing more young men from taking to such a course or do you think it would be acting better

and more honestly by egging them on to the very course which will ultimately ruin them, by applauding their conduct, by stating that however misguided they may be, they have the interests of the country by making heroes of them and by pleading for them—a pleading which they do not care for? It is to the credit of the non-Brahmin party and the future historian will, I am sure, record it, that it kept its head cool and did not give in to the great temptation of being characterised as liberal and progressive by a cheap and insincere appreciation of the Non-co-operators' work it is because of this strong stand that the non-Brahmin party took that more young men have not been ruined in our presidency. We declined to sympathise with the cry that our Colleges should be evacuated and the result was that not more than a dozen students left our Colleges and hardly a dozen students lives were therefore ruined. We stood firm as a rock and declined to recognise that the boycott of law courts is a step towards the promotion of the goal of Swaraj and the result is that only a couple of lawyers have suspended their practice or ruined their lives.

We decline to recognise that the mill-made cloth is an abomination and that hand-spun and hand-woven cloth and the wearing of it marks out the true patriot and the result is that our local Indian Mills have not had those cataclysms which Ahmedabad and Bombay had to face. It is the proudest chapter in the history of the non-Brahmin movement, this great and steadfast policy of not shilly-shallying with a movement which we believe is calculated to ruin the country and its people. The attitude is one of which no non-Brahmin need be ashamed.

VIOLATION OF PROCEDURE RELATING TO TRIALS.

Your correspondent says that the ordinary forms of law were not gone through with some of the political prisoners and that the party had no sympathy for even such men. I am afraid that this is another perversion of facts. What happened was that these political prisoners declined

to avail themselves of the forms and processes of law, refused to submit themselves to the judicial courts and would not cross examine the witnesses, would not file their statements, would not let in their defence and would not have lawyers appearing for them in conducting their case. It was not the Courts of Law; it was not the Government but it was these prisoners that cast aside all law and preferred to go to gaol rather than vindicate themselves. and we in the Council who had no authority to move on their behalf, who had not been approached by a single individual form among them to take up their cause or to ask for a re-considerat ion of their sentences, we would have stultified ourselves if we had interfered on their behalf. Suppose we had appointed a committee to enquire into their cases, what would have happened; if a Committee had taken up their cases the same farce would have been repeated, the accused declining to take part in the proceedings refusing to give any assistance to the Court in elucidating acts ; and these were the reasons why an attempt to get another Committee to go into the sentences of these prisoners was defeated ; not because the party was wanting in humanity but because they realised that in the frame of mind in which these non-co-operating prisoners were, it was a forlorn hope to appoint a Committee. If any further proofs are wanted one has only to refer to the case of the Punjab where a similar committee after going through a thousand cases came to the conclusion that in only four cases they could recommend a reversal of the sentences.

THE "CONSCIENCE CLAUSE" QUESTION.

Lastly your correspondent discusses the question of the conscience clause and says that here again the party in power has shown that it does not value religious liberty in this land of religions. I am afraid, Sir, that there is something radically wrong in the mental attitude of your esteemed correspondent if he does not realise that the attitude of the party in power on this question is proof positive of its catholicity and its broad-mindedness. India is indeed a land of

religions. It has been the mother of many a faith; the persecuted of many a religion have found a safe asylum in this *punya boomi*. Tolerance in religious matters is nowhere to be found so extensively and so exclusively as in this ancient land. The desire to realise what is true in other faiths, to study comparative religion, and to criticise them not from the narrow minded point of view of the bigot but from the large mindedness of the Catholic, has been most prominent in this country, and Sir, it is an irony of fate, but yet a fact pregnant with meaning that it has been left to the Non-Brahmins to vindicate the truth of the statement that India is the land of liberty in matters religious, that tolerance of dogma and of creed, is the basic principle of Vedic religion and that every one who claims to be a disciple of Sri Krishna must find room in his land for differing faiths and varying creeds. The Brahmin who probably because he belongs to the priestly class has necessarily to take a narrower view of religion and has to defend it and to see that no other creed or religion has a footing in the country, may not appreciate the point of view of the Non-Brahmin, but it is to the credit of the Non-Brahmin party that they have shown themselves to be large minded and catholic. I am willing to have this question tested again by the vote of the electorate and let the masses decide whether their children should also have a knowledge of other religions or not. The popular point of view has been admirably expressed by Mr. W. Vijiaraghava Mudaliar, and I take the liberty of extracting a quotation from his speech.

"What is it that it is now proposed to do? You take a boy to the Sanskrit College and ask for admission; the Manager says that not being a Brahmin he is not allowed; you respect his sentiments and quietly go out of the school and speak nothing of the grant. Then you go to the Mahomedan School; the fiery Moor frowns at you for taking an infidel; you salaam to him; you make a hasty exit and never say anything about penalising it. You go to a Non-Panchama College; there the Trustees say he is an Adi Dravida and he is not wanted in the school; there

also you quietly come out. Then you go to a Christian Institution; he says; 'Mine is a Christian Institution no doubt but I have no objection to anybody coming in. I have come from a distant place and have pitched my tent; my tent is broad enough and it is open to everybody; I make no distinction between men and men; let the boy come in and receive instruction subject of course to the discipline of my institution.' Thus the boy is admitted in the school. Then you tell the missionary manager that there is just yet one other small matter, viz., that the boy's father has a conscience and that conscience objects to the boy's attending the Bible class. You suggest to the missionary that he must send the boy out of the Bible class to loaf about or set apart a room in the school out of ear-shot of the Bible class where he can retire and while away the Bible hour sucking his thumb or perhaps smoking a cigarette. At this proposal the missionary looks aghast, for he discovers that he has himself also a conscience, himself is also encumbered with this meddlesome monitor who tells him that he will be failing in his duty by the boy if he undertakes his tutelage on your terms. He feels that if he undertakes the responsibility of the boy's instructions he must impart to him an all-round education including the moulding of his character. His Bible class is the laboratory wherein he manufactures that healthy atmosphere, on which my Hon'ble and esteemed friend Dewan Bahadur L. A. Govindaraghava Iyer expatiated so eloquently yesterday and when the missionary expresses his difficulty to you, Sir, you turn round on him and threaten to cut his grant. 'Is this just? Is it fair?' I oppose this resolution." Is it any wonder of all the members of the Legislative Council only 13 a fatal number too were found to support the Hon'ble Member's motion for inserting a conscience clause in the Grant-in-aid-Code. I have done for the present and await with pleasure the further contribution of your esteemed correspondent.

CHAPTER III.
LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The second article of your experienced publicist deals with the question of Local Self-Government and attempts to show that under the Minister of Local Self-Government, a reactionary policy has been followed resulting in the curtailment of the powers enjoyed by local bodies. I am in entire agreement with your correspondent in the view that the development Local Self-Government is one of the most important problems and forms the very basis of political advancement. In correctly appreciating the statistics relating to the nomination or election of Taluk Board or District Board Presidents, we have however to note that a clear line of demarcation exists between the attitude of the bureaucracy till the year 1919 and thereafter. The Montague-Chelmsford Report laid down that local bodies should be under greater popular control and those that have followed the attitude of the bureaucracy in this presidency, have realised that it was with a view to anticipate the decision of the reformed government that steps were taken in the last days of the existence of an irresponsible bureaucracy to liberalise these institutions. This fundamental fact has to be appreciated if the subsequent progress in popularising these institutions has to be correctly estimated. Your correspondent is undoubtedly aware that in the year 1920 during the last stages of the pre-reformed council several important bills were passed—bills which were intended to place local self-government on a democratic basis. The District Municipalities Act, the City Municipality Act, the Local Boards Act, the Village Panchayats Act, and the Elementary Education Act, all these were rushed through a single year 1920, an output of legislation which, even according to His Excellency the Governor in his opening speech of the Legislative Councils is a record. I have no quarrel with the old bureaucracy which was naturally tempted to show itself as a very liberal government when it was fairly certain that under the changed conditions which were shortly to come into existence such steps would anyhow be taken. But I want your readers to realise that these anti-

cipations of the conclusions of the coming government have made the process of liberalising institutions more slow thereafter.

DISTRICT BOARD PRESIDENTSHIPS.

Your correspondent takes the Government to task for not throwing open more Presidentships of District Boards to election. It is perfectly true that two of these Boards have had elected Presidents in the pre-reform days but it must again be pointed out that this privilege was conferred on them towards the end of 1920. At the beginning of 1919 after the Montague-Chelmsford Report was published only five districts had non-official Presidents of District Boards, and on the 1st of April 1920 six more had nominated non-official Presidents, and on the 1st of April 1921 all District Boards except the Nilgiris had non-official Presidents of District Boards. Now with reference to the discussion in the Council it has to be remembered that for the first time, in at least 20 out of 25 districts, non-official Presidents were nominated in the course of almost a single year, and one would realise that it would be rather premature to think of throwing open every one of the Presidentships to election, so that naturally when a discussion on the question was raised so early as 1921, the Council rejected the motion. Since then, as your correspondent himself points out two more districts have been given the privilege of election.

SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.

It will be useful if I were to give an account of the subsequent events which would have a bearing on the question whether the Presidentships of those Boards should be thrown open to election or not. After the resolution was debated upon, the new Local Boards Act came into force on 1st April 1921 and the entire organisation of the Taluk Boards was recast and a new set of elected members were introduced. It would have been thought by any prudent administrator that a policy of '*festina lente*' was not altogether inadvisable when changes were taking place with such kaleidoscopic rapidity.

Further, over and above the constitutional changes, came the great financial crisis in the local bodies which has not yet passed away. In fact, as your correspondent himself admits in another portion of his letter, it is becoming more acute in some cases at least. Your correspondent has quoted the opinion expressed in the Montague-Chelmsford Report, but it would have been fairer if a fuller account of the recommendations contained in that Report had been placed before the public. The distinguished authors of that Report have suggested that in local bodies which have non-officials elected as Chairmen there should also be a special officer to do the ordinary official work, whose appointment and removal would require government sanction. It is clear that just as in the case of the Madras Corporation for instance, where there is a Commissioner and a President, it was contemplated that every district board should have, especially in cases where it has an elected President a highly paid officer whose salary cannot certainly be less than that of the District Board Engineer. I ask in all seriousness whether in the present financial condition of these local bodies such a step could be contemplated. These are difficulties which only an administrator can realise. It is easy to play the part of a popular reformer by indiscriminately throwing open the Presidentships of all Boards to election, but the genuine administrator has to take a longer vision of things and has to discharge a greater responsibility than merely allow institutions to be wrecked by precipitate action. The very anxiety which a Minister would feel towards these institutions which are nurseries of Self-Government and the success in which will be the test for further reforms, would make him hesitate before rushing in to accept the popular demand which can so easily be raised.

It has also to be pointed out that most of these Presidentships have fallen vacant during the last three or four months and that since February last the minister had a Bill before him which again radically altered the very constitution of the District Boards. It may not be

unfair to imagine that the Minister would have felt it would be better to have this Bill passed into Law and then take up the question of allowing Presidents to be elected when the re-organised District Boards are formed. I can only say that all these circumstances present one aspect of the case which is also worth being considered by the general public. The other aspect which your experienced publicist has chosen to press so vehemently before the attention of the public appears to show that the Minister has done it all with the purpose of winning party adherents in the Legislative Councils - an allegation such as that cannot easily be met. I should like, before I leave this part of subject, to point out that it is a most serious aspersion and it is not for me to say how unjustifiable it is, on the independent character and the judgment of the non-official Presidents of District Boards, gentlemen like the Zamindar of Khalikote, Mr. Narasimha Razu, Mr. Muniswamy Naidu, Sir T. Desikachari, Mr. Sivagnanam Pillai, Mr. Kesava Pillai and Mr. Narasimhacharlu. It is for the impartial public to say whether these gentlemen could be considered as having been appointed to win party adherents in the Legislative Council.

ABUSE OF THE POWERS OF NOMINATION.

Your correspondent next takes the question of nomination of members to the District Boards and of Presidents to Taluk Boards. Let me at once dispose of the question of the nomination of members to the Taluk Boards by Presidents of District Boards. This is a power entirely in the hands of District Boards, and if any President has not used that power properly it is for his district board to take him to task and to show displeasure at his conduct. There is no power under the Act by which the local Government could interfere with the discretion of the President of the Board in such cases, and I make hold to say that if the local Government were to call for an explanation from any President of the District Board as to why the nominations to the Taluk Boards were made in a particular way, your experienced publicist will have

one more grievance that the Minister is unduly interfering with the discretion of the local bodies and their President. As regards nominations to the District Boards, I can say with a fair amount of knowledge and I am certain that most of the Presidents of District Boards will endorse my statement, that the Minister has rarely interfered with the recommendations made by the Presidents of the District Boards. The usual procedure in such cases is for the Presidents to make their recommendations and for the Government to approve of them, and in 99 cases out of a hundred the District Board Presidents have had their proposals accepted. It is perfectly true that in making these recommendations the appointing authority shall have due regard to the representation of minorities. I venture to state that if you take the list of nominations and examine it district by district you will find that this principle has been given effect to as far as possible. The depressed classes, and by that term I mean not merely the Adi-Dravidas but all those classes which come under the untouchables like the Valluvars, the Yenadhis, the Haddes, etc., have had their claims considered; so the Muhammadans and so the backward classes.

I must in this connection express my regret that your experienced publicist who is obviously a gentleman with a sense of responsibility about him should have for once shown his lack of taste by quoting in support of his argument the vitriolic attacks of so notorious an anti-ministerialist as Mr. Raja; but, as the sole instance of a direct abuse of the power of nomination by the Hon'ble the Minister is taken from this speech, I have to refer to it. The Minister is accused of having nominated only one member of the depressed class to the Saidapet Municipal Council when two names were sent up by the Collector. The two names that were submitted to the Minister were both Adi-Dravidas or Panchamas, men who belonged to but one caste among the depressed classes. There were other communities absolutely unrepresented on the Municipal Council. There was the Vanniya community which according to the census

and educational rules is a backward community and which went without representation on the Municipality. In vindication of that very principle which your experienced publicist quotes the Hon. the Minister seems to have removed one of the two Panchama names and substituted the name of a Vanniya. Is this to the credit of the Minister or to his discredit? Does it show that he is antagonistic to the claims of minorities or that he has vindicated the very principle which your correspondent is so anxious to establish. I may mention that the other nominations included two ladies and a Panchama and a Christian none of which could be interfered with especially as the lady councillors declined to serve unless more than one of them were there.

TALUK BOARD NOMINATION.

If according to your correspondent the Minister was anxious to retain this blessed power of nomination in his hands for party purposes, one would have expected that in the nominations of Presidents to Taluk Boards when they were first re-constituted under the Act of 1920 he would have exercised that power much more generously than he has done. On the 1st of April 1921 there were 94 Taluk Boards of whom only 40 had elected Presidents the other 54 being nominated. I might here also point out that on the 1st April 1919 only 13 of these Boards had elected Presidents and only 51 of them altogether had non-official nominated Presidents, the other 43 had official presidents. The Act of 1920 gave the discretion to the Hon'ble the Minister to nominate Presidents if necessary, to these bodies. It is an open secret that many of the District Presidents recommended that the Taluk Boards should have nominated non-officials as Presidents. But the Minister declined to accede to this request, and except in the case of 10 Taluk Boards gave the privilege of election to the remaining 118 Taluk Boards. Was that, I ask your correspondent, an act calculated to reinforce party power? Was that intended for the aggrandisement of the party and for strengthening the party organisation? I may assure your correspondent

that in all these 10 cases the Presidents were nominated either because the District Board Presidents pressed for their nomination or because owing to bifurcation of one or other Taluk Boards the first President had necessarily to be a nominated member in the freshly constituted Taluk Boards.

RE-INTRODUCTION OF OFFICIALS.

I am surprised that your correspondent should charge the Minister with introducing the official element into local bodies. Evidently, he has been misinformed. In the first place so far as Taluk Boards are concerned the nominations rest with the district boards, and if there are any officials introduced in a few of the local boards, the responsibility lies not with the Minister but with the district Board President. To my knowledge there are only three districts in which the District Medical Officer has been nominated by the Hon. the Minister, and I do not think even your correspondent would suggest that the introduction of a medical officer whose knowledge may be very necessary for guiding the Board is a step towards officialising these institutions. There are 4 District Boards in which the Collector has been nominated, viz., the District Boards of Ramnad, Tinnevelly, Trichinopoly and South Arcot, and the whole of the diatribe can only be based on these four nominations, I ask your readers to say whether the Collectors in these cases could have been nominated to help the District Board Presidents who are supposed to be at logger heads with the District Board Members. Does your publicist seriously suggest that the Raja of Ramnad is not able to command a majority in his District Board and wants the adventitious aid of Mr. V. T. Krishnamachariar to help him to manage his recalcitrant councillors? Does he suggest that gentlemen like Sir T. Desikachari and Mr. Sivagnanam Pillai require a Collector to make peace between them and their members? I might also mention here that these nominations were made at the request of the District Board Presidents themselves, and the reason of it is very simple. It is only perversity that can see in these nominations the

desire to provide a handy blunder-buss in the person of the Collector to silence noisy members of the Council. The Presidents were actuated by the fact that the Collector being a member of the District Board would smoothen the strained relations that exist undoubtedly all over the Presidency and I am sure, to the knowledge of your experienced publicist also, between the Local Board staff and the revenue staff. It is freely stated that a non-official President of the District Board went about boasting that when a District Collector visited his Board meeting he did not take any notice of him and would not even offer him a chair for five minutes. Is that the independent conduct which your experienced publicist appreciates? No, Sir, a Minister with a sense of responsibility would be anxious to see that there is harmony between one branch of administration and the other, and he must help every President of the District Board who in the interest of the administration entrusted to him is anxious to promote that harmony, and it is really in pursuance of the deliberate policy of the Act 1920 that the Minister has been guided in acceding to the request of some of these Presidents of these Local Boards.

PANCHAYATS.

Your correspondent is evidently talking without book when he levels the accusation that nothing tangible has been attempted during these three years with respect to the formation of Village Panchayats. The Village Panchayat Act came into effect on the 1st of April 1921, and it was the obvious duty of public spirited gentlemen like your experienced publicist to take to the work, however hum-drum it may be, of going about and forming these Village Panchayats. The help of Government is not required; local patriotism and public spirit is what is necessary to form these Village Panchayats; and it is only because the Government found that even 'experienced publicists' were not taking any steps in forming these Panchayats that an officer, the Registrar of Panchayats was appointed in December 1921. This officer whose work is known to all local bodies has gone about giving the

necessary impetus to local non-officials, and in the course of a single year has been able to form over 200 Village Panchayats. Your correspondent may describe this as a not tangible result, but those who know the uphill work that has to be done would realise that it is a great achievement. When once the first few Panchayats are formed in each District the speed will necessarily be accelerated, and in the course of the next two or three years I feel certain that several thousands of Village Panchayats will be formed.

CHAPTER IV.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

THE MUNICIPALITIES.

Your correspondent gives three specific instances where the Minister has followed a retrograde policy. I am always glad when I come across specific indictments instead of vague and general statements, as it is easy to grapple with them and to answer them one after another. So far as the Ootacamund Municipality is concerned it is perfectly true that the Minister promised to consider the subject of giving the Council the privilege of electing its Chairman. But your correspondent is obviously unaware of the fact that the Council had passed a resolution just at the time when this question was about to be considered by the Minister that it might continue to have a nominated Chairman. It was only because of the repeated requests of the Council itself not to have the privilege of election thrust on it that the Government had acceded to continuing a nominated Chairman, and your correspondent may rest assured that if the Council at any time shows its inclination to have an elected Chairman the Hon'ble the Minister would be only too happy to confer the privilege on the council. As regards the other Municipalities that your correspondent refers to as having nominated Chairmen your correspondent will easily realise that on the first constitution of a Municipality the proper thing is to nominate a Chairman, and when the Municipalities are subsequently re-constituted by having their

members elected the privilege of election is generally given. Hindupur which your correspondent refers to has had this privilege conferred on it. I may also refer to the Saidapet Municipality which was given the privilege of electing a Chairman recently by the Hon'ble the Minister.

BEZWADA MUNICIPALITY.

I am glad your correspondent has referred to the Bezwada Municipality which had its elections postponed for a time, as that is a striking example of the fact that the Minister has been accentuated in his dealings with the local institutions not with a desire to strengthening the party organisation but solely in the interests of local self-Government. The Chairman of this municipality was a Brahmin gentleman who by no stretch of imagination could be considered either as a sympathiser of the party or as a friend of the Minister, and yet his term of office was continued for nearly two years, because the elections under the new Act were postponed. It is an open secret that both the Collector of the district and the Brahmin Chairman of the Municipality had to plead very hard with the Minister to put off the election as it would have been disastrous to the interests of the town if it had been held earlier. Your correspondent himself says and quotes with approval the cases of other countries that local administration should be beyond party politics, but in the two years in question feeling was running very high in Bezwada owing to the Non-Co-operation movement, and responsible people were of opinion that it would be unfair that the elections should take place under such artificial conditions. Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao, as an elected representative of the district, and Mr. C. R. Reddy, as one accustomed to rush in where more experienced men would hesitate, might have felt the necessity of interpellating the Government on the subject. But an administrator with the sole purpose of zealously guarding the good name of an institution entrusted to his care had no option but to allow local ebullition to subside before reconstituting the Municipality. I look upon this Act of the

Government as one calculated to show its determination to advance Local Self-Government and reflecting the greatest credit on it.

THE CHIRALA AFFAIR.

The last instance of a "retrograde policy" pursued by the Ministry, is the best instance to prove its democratic tendency. Chirala Municipality and the troubles connected with it have gone down into history, and if it reflects any discredit at all on any one it is on those who tried to keep up the agitation to abolish the Municipality and who gave necessary help to the people to make them stick to their determination. In the first place the Municipality of Chirala was constituted by the old bureaucratic Government, and it would have been the easiest thing for the Ministry to have acceded to the request to abolish it. There was no question of prestige, no vote of censure contemplated. What then is the explanation for the attitude of the Ministry I agree with your correspondent that the fact that all the three Ministers spoke on the resolution is a correct measure of the importance they attached to it. The question was really one between protecting the masses and the dumb people and taking sides with the oligarchy and the higher classes. It is obvious that in every Municipality it is the few rich that pay generally and it is the many thousands of people who never pay the tax that get the benefit. If a referendum were now made I am fairly certain that the rich people would unhesitatingly vote against the formation of any Municipality; for their houses and their surroundings could be as sanitary, their children could be as well-educated, their health as carefully looked after without a Municipality as with one. It is the poor, the illiterate, the homeless, that crave for the benefits of Municipalities. Chirala was no exception to this, it was the richer Vysias that were behind the agitation for the abolition of the Municipality, and they were able to coerce their poor tenants to evacuate the town. It would have been the most scandalous disgrace and it would have marked out the Ministerial Party as a non-democratic one, ready to

join the cause of the rich as against the poor, if it had for a moment given in to this agitation. I am proud and thankful that the Party to which I belong has given this glorious example of standing up for the rights of the masses. Subsequent events have merely emphasised the fact that our decision was the correct one. The people of Chirala are now thinking of introducing free elementary and compulsory education, and the Chirala Municipality is now anxiously framing schemes of vocational training, and if there is one instance where the opposition has blundered and stands discredited it is in the case of Chirala Municipality.

GROUP CONFERENCES.

Your correspondent has stated that the Group Conferences of Local Boards and Municipalities have merely served the purpose of promoting party ties and have resulted in no tangible improvements either in Local Board or Municipal Administration. If it is so, it is a severe condemnation not of the Minister or of the Ministerial Party but of those honorary workers who throughout the length and breadth of this Presidency are engaged in the cause of Local Self-Government. I do not share in this feeling, and I am afraid your correspondent's prejudice of the Ministry has blinded him to the work of these Conferences. Presidents after Presidents of these Group Conferences have spoken of the value of such gatherings, and I have never seen suggested anywhere that any question of party was involved in these Group Conferences. Your correspondent says that resolutions of these Conferences have produced no practical results. Let me quote a short extract from the Presidential Address of Mr. Ramalinga Chettiar delivered so late as the 20th October 1922 at Mangalore, a gentleman who cannot be described as *ultra partial* towards the administration of the Local Self-Government. Says Mr. Chettiar: "The Government have recently passed orders giving an account of steps taken by them on the resolutions of Group Conferences held last year. A study of the order and the annexure there shows that the

Government attached great weight to the considered opinions of the Conferences. The recommendations made for the amendment of several Acts are said to be under consideration. The Government admit that the resolutions as a whole bear the mark of good sense and sincerity. The way in which they have dealt with the resolutions—all speaking on behalf of the local bodies may see—augurs well for the progress of Self-Government in this presidency. Our gratitude is therefore due to the Government for the considerate way in which they have dealt with us in this matter."

FINANCIAL POSITION OF LOCAL BODIES.

It will take too much of my time if I were to canvass merely vague allegations that are made by your correspondent in regard to the attitude of the Ministry on this vital question. What justification has your correspondent got for stating that the financial recommendations have not been given effect to "on account of want of vigour in pressing the case of the local bodies on the financial officers of the Government?" Every member of the Legislative Council has realised what a strong fight the Minister of Local Self-Government has been putting on behalf of these local bodies and how even this year a sum of 17 lakhs has been provided to meet the deficits of the various local bodies. It will take too much space if I were to enter into a review of the recommendations of the Financial Relations Committee. It will not be difficult for me to show that this Committee has done more harm than good in the idealistic basis of its classification of services, and in its recommendations regarding grants which could only have been given effect to if the Exchequer was an inexhaustible one, and that in a lean year with a deficit budget the report has inevitably broken down like a house composed of a pack of cards. But that is by the way. I am astonished to see a responsible gentleman stating that during the three years of Ministerial administration the Local Government had more than 1000 lakhs of rupees at their disposal over and above the resources they have had when the Reformed Government

came into existence. Does your correspondent forget that the Salaries Committee, which sat in the pre-Reform days and of which non-official gentlemen like Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao were members, was responsible for increasing the expenditure of the Presidency by over 2 crores of rupees per year? Does he likewise forget that thanks to the complacency with which members of the party to which your 'experienced publicist' probably belongs looked on while Imperial Services had their salaries raised time after time, a huge additional burden was thrown on provincial finances? Is he aware that it was left to a humble member of the non-Brahmin party to protest strongly in London in the columns of the "Spectator" against Mr. Montague's Policy of revising the salaries of Imperial Services like the I. M. S.? The Ministry had never had this wind fall of 1000 lakhs, but on the contrary it had a veritable damnosa hereditas of the previous Government which was so ably assisted by the then non-official members of the Legislative Council in its 'rake's progress.'

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES.

Your correspondent is aghast at the idea that the Minister has dropped the two bills which he had intended to bring into the Council relating to the Local Boards. I am certain that if these bills had been brought forward in the August meeting of the Council, your correspondent if he were a member of the council, would have been the first to oppose the consideration of the Bills, even as some members of his way of thinking opposed the passing of the Religious Endowments bill on the ground that it was being rushed through during the last days of an expiring Council. Your correspondent may have further quoted English constitutional precedents from 'May' and 'Redlich' showing that it is a well-understood convention that controversial measures should not be taken up after it has been decided to dissolve a Parliament or a Council. It probably was the attitude of some of the members on the Religious Endowments Bill, their vehement protests that such

measures should not be rushed through at the end of a Council, that induced the Hon'ble the Minister to postpone the consideration of these Bills. Your correspondent suggests that retrograde provisions are embodied in the Bill, but after all it is a mere draft and has yet to be accepted by the Council, and the Minister may re-consider his position, if the Council expresses an opinion that any particular provision is reactionary. But in fairness to the Minister it must however be stated that the particular provision taken exception to by your correspondent, viz., to give a power of supervision to the District Board over the Taluk Boards and the Taluk Board over the Union Boards, was inserted at the suggestion of non-official gentlemen like your experienced publicist. Let me quote from the speech of Mr. Ramalinga Chettiar again. "It is a question for you to consider whether and what sort of supervision and control you would advise to be given to the District Board over the establishment and work of the Taluk Boards and the Taluk Board over those of the Union Boards, while on the one hand independence and Self-Government are good things, and each locality should be allowed to arrange its own local matters. It is a question for consideration whether it is not necessary in the present state of things that there should be some power vested in somebody outside to co-ordinate what is being done to stimulate and to enforce the execution of at least the minimum service. It cannot be denied that there are some Boards which still want some outside supervision to enforce them to do their duties. So it seems to me that some sort of inspection may be necessary for some time to come." That is the view of a gentleman whom I dare say your experienced journalist considers a model of independence and a democratic thinker,

CHAPTER IV.

RETRENCHMENT AND EXPENDITURE.

In his third article reviewing the work of the Madras Ministry your correspondent deals with the financial aspect of the administration and comes to the conclusion that the Ministry has not fought with the reserved half to get more allotments for the transferred subject and that the Council has not sufficiently pressed home the cry for retrenchment. I am afraid that in his attempt to discredit the Ministry and party he has trodden on rather dangerous ground—dangerous because finance unless handled by very knowing hands leads one to the worst quagmires.

The question of finance is one of the most intricate questions requiring special study and an extraordinary amount of care and attention. It cannot be discussed with much profit in newspaper articles, neither can the easy apriori opinions which can be expressed regarding law and order or education or Local Self-Government, be indulged in with reference to Finance. A perusal of the article of your correspondent establishes beyond all doubt the fact that a knowledge of financial problems is not his forte.

THE HAPPY FAMILY.

Your correspondent takes the Ministers to task for not fighting for a greater share of revenues for the transferred subjects under their charge. His Excellency has undoubtedly made repeated references to the Cabinet being a happy family but I cannot remember a single occasion when His Excellency has stated that the two halves of the Government "have had no differences financial or otherwise." And from this false premises your correspondent draws the conclusion "that the Ministers are a very obliging set and were either content with the allotments or did not think they were in need of more funds." Nothing can be further from the truth. It is an open secret that during the cabinet meeting relating to allocation of funds

there is a hard fight put up to get as much money as possible to the transferred half. In fact in the budget discussion of 1921 in response to an indiscreet question from Mr. Rama Chandra Row, the Hon'ble Minister for Development was about to give the information regarding the claims put forward by ministers but both the gentlemen were fortunately pulled up by the President who reminded the Council that on the floor of the house diarchy was not recognised. This undoubted wrangling of which there is overwhelming evidence, is not inconsistent with the happy family, for I consider the happy family to be, not that which never has a difference but that which knows how to dispense with the help of a meddlesome intermediary.

GOVERNOR'S ALLOCATION.

Your correspondent suggests that the Ministers if they were good fighters woud have forced the Governor to allocate the revenues between the two halves or get an arbitrator to do so according to the devolution rules and he quotes with approval the instances in other provinces where such a thing has been done. I am not aware of any province where such allocation has taken place but if it has I have no hesitation in saying that the Ministers there have committed a great blunder. This controversy raises the whole question of the joint and separate purse which was so much in evidence before the Joint-Committee. The Government of India in the course of its comments on the reforms reported and the Fetham Committee recommendations advocated strongly for a separate purse. Mr. Montague on the other hand pleaded equally vehemently for a joint-purse and was supported in his plea by many of the Indian witnesses. The provision in the devolution rules is a compromise, the power of the Governor to allocate the revenues being provided to give effect to the recommendations of the Government of India. Let us examine what would happen if the Ministers had taken the advice of your experienced publicist and forced the Governor to divide the revenues. How would this division take place? It is obvious that

the Governor is in a special degree* responsible to the Parliament for the administration of reserved subjects and it naturally follows that when his powers are invoked he has first to satisfy the demands of the reserved half. In fact his instructions are to that effect This responsibility has been emphasised even in the Montague-Chelmsford Report which says in para. 256. "The first charge on provincial revenues will be the contribution to the Government of India; and after that, the supply for the reserved subjects will have priority. The Governor-in-Council is responsible for reserved subjects; we hold that he must have power to decide what revenues he requires." Is it not apparent then that the decision of either the Governor or an independent arbitrator must inevitably go against the Ministers? These questions can only arise in lean years when there is not enough in the hotch-pot to go round and what more obvious for any one to say than that new developments in transferred departments may await better times and that meanwhile essential reserved departments must have sufficient funds to carry on their accustomed work.

The only hope therefore lay in mutual adjustments and in trying to get as much as possible for transferred by departments by persuasion and not by showing the bludgeon of a Governor's decision, which in the swing, will knock you out and this was the policy which the clear foresight of our Ministers enabled them to pursue. The advantages of the course were obvious. The joint discussions enabled them to make themselves felt in decisions regarding reserved subjects. It gave them the necessary opportunity to suggest new policies to be pursued in subjects which were not under their control. Nor is this all. As things have happened in this Presidency it would have been disastrous if a different policy had been pursued. Under the devolution rules, failing agreement the Governor allocates the revenue specifying the fractional proportions of the revenues and balances which shall be assigned to each class of subjects. The order of allocation will be in force for the whole of the period of the existing council and may extend to a year thereafter. Suppose the

Ministers had pressed for an allocation in 1921. His Excellency would have given, among other revenues a certain share of excise revenue and probably a small share of court-fees and stamp revenue to the Ministers. The allocation would hold good for three years. What would be the revenue in the hands of the Ministers in 1922 when the excise revenue had fallen by over a crore? How would the Ministers have benefitted again by the passage of the two bills relating to court-fees and stamps which brought in according to your correspondent an additional 80 lakhs of rupees? What again would be the benefit to the transferred half of the retrenchments forced upon the reserved departments by the Council? The fixed proportions are there and cannot be reviewed for three years unless it be by mutual agreement and one may be sure that the executive government would not be anxious to get such a beneficial arrangement set aside in a hurry.

Let us look at this question from an other point of view. A selfish Ministry would have induced the Governor to make the allocation, far from the date of the allocation the position of the Ministry would have been a happy one. The funds at their disposal are strictly limited. Additional taxation is obnoxious to the Legislature and hence there can be no finding fault with them for not expanding education or developing industries or providing greater medical relief. They have necessarily to cut their coat according to the cloth and the only question is not whether the coat is big enough but whether it is proportionately cut. We must indeed be thankful that our Ministers have not allowed themselves to be tempted to take advantage of such devices but have rather allowed themselves to be pilloried by Financial ignoramuses in their laudable endeavours to serve their province and the cause of progress.

FINANCIAL POSITION.

Let us look at the financial position during the last four years and see what our Ministers have done and what resources were open to them. It is often suggested, and I see it repeated even by your experienced publicist, that

after the provincial adjustment with the Central Government a large fund was at our disposal (325 lakhs according to your correspondent). There cannot be a greater fallacy for a great portion of it was swallowed up and the remainder practically hypothecated before the Ministers took charge of their office. The revenue for the year 1920-21 before the reforms was 953·87 lakhs and the expenditure was 1101·02 lakhs, i.e. the expenditure was 148 lakhs over the revenue largely due to the revision of the pay of the services. But this revision was not completed and in the year 1921-22 another crore of rupees had to be added so that nearly 2½ crores out of the supposed surplus of 3¼ crores was expended by the predecessors of the Ministers and when the Ministers took charge they had only a surplus over the previous year's revenue of 75 lakhs. Thanks, however, to the Non-co-operation movement, the fall in excise revenue and the heavy expenditure consequent on the Moplah outbreak this surplus became illusory and a deficit budget was the result.

Under such distressing circumstances let us see how the Ministers succeeded by persuasion to get money for their subjects. In 1921-22 the total expenditure of the province was 1329·92 lakhs of which the reserved departments got 906·24 lakhs and the transferred 423·68 (deducting of course the contributions to the Central Government). In 1922-23 according to the revised estimates the revenue fell by 25 lakhs being 1304·84 lakhs and the reserved departments got 869·53 lakhs and transferred 435·31 lakhs, i.e. while the total revenue fell by 25 lakhs, the transferred departments actually got 12 lakhs more than in the previous year. In 1920-24 the estimate shows the revenue at 1363·72 lakhs the expenditure on reserved half was 897·09 and the transferred 466·63 lakhs, i.e., while the revenue increased by 37 lakhs as compared with 1921-22 the expenditure on reserved subjects was still 9 lakhs less and that on transferred subjects was 43 lakhs more, in other words, the whole of the increase and something more went to the transferred subjects. Does this look as if "the Ministers are a very

obligating set and were either apparently content to ta e what was given for their departments or they did not think that their departments were in need of funds"? Does it not rather show that your experienced publicist is very much out of his depths in dealing with financial questions?

RETRENCHMENT AND REFORM.

Your correspondent suggests that as only small sums were actually reduced in the budget, the Council has not tackled the question of retrenchment properly. I am afraid that your correspondent has either not understood the situation properly or is misreading facts. What about the numerous cases in which budget motions were withdrawn on the assurance of the departments that the question will be further examined? What about the innumerable motions to omit duty allowances, to cut short travelling allowances which were withdrawn on the promise of the member concerned? And have not these promises been subsequently carried? Should not the 45 lakhs saved through travelling allowances and contingencies be put to the credit of the Council? Should not the ten lakhs saved by the Hon'ble Minister in the P. W. D. be put to the credit of the Council? Do you suggest that only those items that have actually been retrenched by the Council in budget debate form the retrenchment record? No, Sir, the Council has only too faithfully carried out its campaign of retrenchment. It has become odious to the public services and I think it is time we cry halt for I see a new danger in further retrenchment and I feel that more than your experienced publicist other forces are now at work in carrying on the retrenchment campaign. I do not like to suggest it but there is a wide feeling that the retrenchment campaign is at present being vigorously pushed on to find the money necessary to give effect to the recommendations of the new public services commission. And so I warn your publicist not to be too much on this hobby of retrenchment which can easily be ridden to death.

RESTORATION OF GRANTS.

There are only three instances where His Excellency has restored the grants—an eloquent tribute to the business— like methods of the Council. The Russelkonda Saw Mill grant which was restored by the Governor was intended according to His Excellency to fulfil contractual obligations and the controversy need not be revived. The second restoration was a small item of Rs. 10,000 to carry on the department for a few months. The third is the restoration of 3 lakhs of rupees under Agency. Now in the course of the debate it was made quite clear that what was intended was not an actual saving of 5 lakhs but a desired away with the agency division and it was hoped that there would be some saving His Excellency in restoring the grant stated that the question of abolishing the agency would be considered and your experienced publicist must have seen in the papers the announcement that it has been decided to abolish the agency. The consequential savings will necessarily follow and your correspondent need not be perturbed at the restoration of the grant.

MINISTERS' SALARIES.

Your correspondent devotes a great deal of space in discussing the very simple question of Ministers' salaries. I look upon the whole discussion as reflecting little credit on either democrates or economists. It is obvious that no large savings can be effected, no budget balanced by a few thousands saved by cutting off their salaries. But this motion and your correspondent's reference to Ministers travelling in saloons leads me to the conclusion that we are not yet safe for democracy. Democracy does not mean that every man should be pulled and all of us should wear the garments of nature and live on herbs and fruit, the delicious democracy of Adam and Eve. Even in democracy there is dignity attached to a position and no true democrat would wish to pull down the very idols which he lovingly placed on a pedestal. Even in Bolshevik Russia Lenin and Trotsky travel in special trains. I frankly do not appreciate the attempts to cut

the salaries neither do I look with approval on the Ministers' voluntary reduction of salary. Your correspondent with his usual want of charity suggests that they were driven to this step because three of their own party gave notice of reduction. I may assure him knowing my party that there was not the faintest chance of such a motion being carried out. The only explanation I can give is that they had probably before them the proposal which has since been vetoed, of revising the pay of the gazetted services and they might have felt that without themselves setting an example they could not approve of such a proposal.

STRENGTH OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

Your correspondent gives certain illustrations to show that the Council has not been keen on the idea of retrenchment but I am afraid he therein betrays his own lack of knowledge of administrative problems. Your correspondent takes the council to task for not passing the original resolution to reduce the number of Executive Councillors from four to two but passing it in the amended form of reducing it to three Councillors. Now the original resolution would have landed us into an absurd position--a position which the Executive Councillors would have been only too happy to find us in. It is obvious that Finance requires almost solely a member of the council to be in charge and he would indeed be an ignoramus who would venture to say that practically all other subjects could be managed by a single member. The local government would have undoubtedly forwarded the resolution and pointed out the impossibility of giving effect to it. The council could have as well passed a resolution abolishing the Executive Council and have deserved the encomium of your experienced publicist as an ultra-retrenchment council. But the effect of passing the amended resolution was very much different. In 1920 the Local Government had given its considered opinion that three Councillors were sufficient and therefore they could not very well oppose the amended resolution. The matter would have been settled if reactionary forces had

not got the ascendancy in England. Your correspondent twitting the 'Justice' for suggesting a Mohamedan substitute for Sir Habibullah is delightful reading and is as native as it is ingenious. Does your correspondent really think that your readers are blind and cannot see through this clever artifice? The question of the strength of the council has to be settled by the Secretary of State and the acting appointment has to be made by the Governor-in-Council. One is not inconsistent with the other and the result of not 'clamouring' would be that probably a follower of your experienced publicist would speak in. It reminds me of the spider who invited the fly to walk into its parlour.

I do not desire to canvass the recommendations of the Committee on the abolition of the Board of Revenue for I believe very shortly it will be written '*delenda est* Board of Revenue.'

REDUCTION OF GAZETTED SERVICES.

Your correspondent next instances the beatific resolution of Mr. Venkataramana Iyengar that the strength of the Gazetted Services should be reduced by 20 per cent. and complains that the Legislative Council, i.e., the Ministerial party defeated this resolution I am willing to take full responsibility for the Ministerial attitude and am proud to see that this is another resolution obviously impracticable and if literally given effect to is capable of producing the greatest harm. In the first place the Imperial Services could not be touched. Secondly, is it contemplated that in all the departments the strength of the gazetted staff should be reduced by a fifth? Are you prepared to say that 20 per cent. of the assistant surgeons should be retired and the hospital in their charge closed. Is it your contention that a fifth of the health staff should be sent home? Do you suggest that a fifth of the staff of educational institutions should be retired with the necessary result that Government institutions are closed? No, Sir, the resolution was thoughtlessly worded

and would have been mischievous in its consequences if it had been passed. But so far as the transferred departments are concerned the Ministers have given full weight to this recommendation and have gone even further. It is obvious that in the developing and nation building departments, the cry is not far less but more staff. But take a department like the P. W. D. where 3 out of 8 Superintending Engineers' divisions have been abolished and more than 20 per cent reduction of the strength of Executive Engineers and sub-divisional officers effected. But looks at the attitude of your paragons of economy when like questions are raised in other departments. In the Budget debate of 1922 Mr. Balajee Rao Naidu moved to reduce the cost of the establishment of the High Court by about 20 per cent but thanks to the opposition which almost solidly supported the Law Member the motion was lost Mr. Ethirajulu Naidu at the same debate moved for the reduction of the number of the temporary subordinate courts and was fortunate enough to carry it through several of the opposition. Members sided with the Government but a supplementary demand was subsequently brought and with the help of the opposition passed. Does Mr. Venkataramana Iyengar's resolution or the 30 per cent reduction of gazetted officers exclude the judicial services? Are you sincere in your cry for economy?

I am afraid Sir, I cannot go into further details without touching on top much of the space in your valuable paper. There is only one other subject which I propose to touch upon. Your correspondent is angry that a separate retrenchment Committee was not appointed but the Finance Committee has been asked to examine the question of retrenchment. I was one of those who thought that an elected Committee of the House like the Finance Committee was better than a nominated Committee. But I am free to confess, thought for reasons very different from that of your experienced correspondent, that a separate Committee might under the present circumstances have been better.

PART II.

Lectures on the Non-Brahmin Movement.

"THE FUTURE"

Mr. RAMASWAMY MUDALIAR'S SPEECH

AT VELLORE

The following is the speech delivered by Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar on "The Future" at the Town Hall, Vellore, on the 6th November, 1922.

Raja Sahib and Citizens of Vellore.

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to see this huge audience gathered here this evening to do honour to one of the foremost citizens of this presidency, the great leader of a democratic party and the Chief Minister of the Government of Madras. My pleasure is enhanced and intensified by the contemplation of the fact that the homage paid by you this evening is as much to the charming personality of a popular leader as to the cause he represents, the movement of which he has been described to be one of the shining lights, to its justice, its popularity and above all to the hold which it has on the real people of the land.

THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT.

Friends, it is too late in the day for me to justify, what has been termed, the "Justice" or the non-brahmin movement. In its early days, at the inception of the movement, when it was still a tottering infant, I have spoken on a hundred platforms in defence and in justification of the cause. To-day I feel that it hardly needs either. The events of the past, the achievements of the last few years, have justified it better than my poor eloquence could do. The forces of nature, the democratic tendencies of the times, the ideals that were preached to the world as a result of the devastating war, those great truths which were unearthed by the heroes that shed their blood in the cause of liberty—these have afforded a better justification of the movement, of the cause that we represent than my poor untutored tongue can ever claim to do. I say therefore, friends, that I have not come here to-day to defend, much less to apologise for, the movement.

Even in its early days it hardly stood in need of any serious argument to justify its existence. You know that the claims of the community have been put forward by various people from time to time and we were not the first nor shall we be the last to bring such an issue before the public. Was the cry of Mysore for the Mysoreans any less communal? Was the cry of Travancore for the Travancoreans, or Cochin for Cochinites, or the cry nearer home of Andhra for the Andhras province any more national, any more idealistic than ours? They say that ours is a sectarion cause, that it militates against national development, that it retards the progress of the country. But I ask whether in essence it is different from the other cries that have been raised in the past. Am I to understand that the divine difference of caste must ever unify us but that the diabolical divergences of language or geographical position must ever keep us asunder? Those that have raised this bogey know only too well on what slippery ground their arguments and their position stand. Friends, I have been called upon to lecture on "The Future". I do not know what claim I can advance to qualify myself to speak on such a subject. I am not a prophet either by birth or by training, and I must leave the art of prophesying to a holier caste than mine. But I can tell you something of the past, something of the present, its difficulties and its trials, something too of that I hope the future may be if our wishes and aspirations come true.

CASTE AND POLITICS

Our critics are never tired of saying that in this presidency unfortunately political divisions have been formed on the basis of caste, that in other civilized countries it is a matter of one's opinions, one's predilictions, one's views on life that decide to what political party one belongs and that the spectacle of a caste-based political party is unprecendented and unknown to the history of politics. I could easily answer it by saying that caste is unknown anywhere in the world except in this country, and that the frigid system which marks out a man with the badge

of inferiority at his very birth is a spectacle unrivalled in the world. But I would go farther and ask you whether after all caste is the real basis of our division. Is there no underlying cause except the mere accidence of birth that justifies the present division of parties? Could you not see beneath the apparent surface something more tangible and more substantial, some better justification for this separation of parties? Sir, the justification is apparent. It is obvious to every one who has ever bestowed any thought on the subject. He who runs may read the open book. Here as elsewhere the difference is based on opinions. Here as elsewhere the difference is based on difference of ideas, of aims, of aspirations. Here as elsewhere the division is justified by the difference in the view point, in the outlook on life; in the varied tendencies of the persons. That this difference in outlook, in the aims and ideals, coincides with the difference in caste, is not our fault. It is our misfortune. It is not that we have created this difference. It is not the great leaders of our movement, Sir P. Theagaroya Chettiyar or the late lamented Doctor Nair, that nurtured these divisions. They merely recognised them. It is your sages and seers, your ancestors who laid down the rules of life that promulgated these differences. When they laid down that the Brahmin was the supreme being in this world, when they ordained that the other three castes should subserve his ends, that they should minister to his wants, that he should be like the lotus in the field "they toil not neither do they spin", that we the lower castes should be drawers of water and hewers of wood, when they promulgated the theory and made successive generations practise it, that knowledge should not be for such as we are they laid the sure and solid foundation of that difference which is now being translated into practice by the division of parties on the basis of caste. I am not indulging in an imaginary picture when I say that there is an essential difference, as great as, if not greater than, the differences existing between any two political parties of the world, between the one caste and the others and my authority is from the great writers of the past. The

sacred books of the East, if you will only read them have expounded this difference more clearly than I could. I repeat therefore that it is our misfortune and not our fault that the difference of caste happens to coincide with the difference in outlook, in aims, in ideals and in methods of progress.

THE STRUGGLE OF AGES

For centuries we have had this silent antagonism of conflicting ideals, for ages this silent, grim and terrible struggle has been going on. Do not imagine for a moment that any of our leaders could have created this movement? They are great men, men of outstanding personality, the protaganists of the period, men who in any other age and in any other clime would have been marked out as national heroes of the highest order. But in the interests of truth it must be stated that even to them to start a movement of this nature and of this magnitude would have been too herculean, too stupendous. The struggle had been going on for ages the heart-burnings were there for decades. The forces were there; the materials were there; they lay in shapeless mass. The hour had come and fortunately for us, the men were there. They communicated to them the Promethean spark, the celestial fire which made them instinct with life and under their guidance this movement has developed into a great national movement fraught with immense possibilities, capable of innumerable blessings, to generations of my countrymen yet unborn. Such was the genesis of this movement, such the birth of a mighty cause. In the wise dispensation of an inscrutable providence all great things are born in lowly surroundings and amidst great travail.

THE PAST.

Friends, I have not the time to go into the history of the early struggles of our movement, when we had to face a particularly vocal and none too scrupulous enemy, whose vitriolic press and diabolical misrepresentation frightened away many an individual, when our own ranks were not

too well-filled, when there was doubt and hesitancy and sometimes backsliding, when it was impossible to distinguish friend from foe and when we found opposition in the most unexpected quarters. Fortuantely for us the leaven of our movement began to permeate freely and so it came to pass that at the last elections we captured the vast majority of the seats in the Legislative Council and, thanks to His Excellency Lord Willingdon whose parliamentary instincts are sound to the core, we had our own ministry established. For two years nearly now, our Ministers and Legislative Council has been doing the great national work of improving the condition of onr people, of carrying out those ideals which we had preached from time to time, of fulfilling these pledges and promises which we held out when we stood to seek the suffrage of our electors. In the face of great obstacles in the teeth of severe opposition, amidst the most depressing circumstances, with the country at any time ready to be carried off its feet by ignorant opportunists and ill-equipped youth, whose main asset was an unbalanced judgment and an illdigested knowledge, with an exchequer deplete, our Ministers, the first in the field—whose very period of office was a great handicap—have been carrying on their duties, trying to make the best of a none too rosy situation and doing their level best to live up to the traditions of parliamentary life Theirs has not been a bed of roses and in the dreary desert of their official existence they come occasionally across the oasis of a people's welcome such as that which you have extended to-day. I am not here to speak on behalf of the Ministry. They have abler and better advocates of their work, of their achievements and the singleness of purpose with which they are carrying out their high office. I am here only to speak of the present, of what is happening in your Legislative Councils, of the work that is being carried on. Unfortunately, I have a quarrel to pick with you in this respect. How many of you I ask care to follow the proceedings of the Legislative Council; how many seek to know what is going on in other provinces; how many have their opinions ready made from those

hostile organs. The New India' and the "Hindu" the former the most inveterate opponent of the non-brahmin cause, with a congenital blindness for anything good in us, in our councils or in our cause, the latter careful enough not to attack us often in its leaders but not ashamed to lend its correspondence columns to the most slanderous and the most ill-informed attacks on the party and the Ministry.

A COMPARISON

Friends, I do wish that you would come with me and see the workings of the different councils of this country before you form your opinion of our Local Council and the majority party. Shall we go to Bombay and see how even there communal questions are often raised, and witness the spectacle of a ministry which is never sure of its party? Shall we go further north to holy Allahabad and see how the United Provinces Council is conducting itself? Will you count for me how often the Ministry has been defeated on resolutions, on bills, on vital questions on which the Ministers have taken an uncompromising position? Are you surprised that the Hon'ble Mr. Chintamani whose name figured prominently in the local Theosophic Journal, and who you thought was one of the most popular of Ministers, cannot command the confidence of any considerable section of the council and it is by sufference of the Governor rather than on the solid foundation of a people's confidence that he retains his seat in the Ministry? Will you take a further journey to the land of the five rivers and see there the differences on communal matters between the Ministers themselves, and listen with surprise and perhaps indignation to debates in the Council where the heads of departments attack Ministers and Ministers retaliate on permanent official and the council votes against both impartially. Shall we go to Bengal, the land of emotionalism, the birth place of nationalism and see the most revered name Sir Surendranath Bannerjee being badgered and torn by the angry denunciations of reckless councillors and the council vote down the propositions of the Ministers. And lastly will you

come with me to the Fort St. George and see your own council at work, the dignity with which the proceedings are conducted, the confidence with which the Ministry carries through its work, the respect and regard with which the Ministers are treated and the masterly way in which the councillors carry out their wishes. To any one not biassed by that passion which is born of inveterate hatred it will be clear that ours is the only council which has established sound parliamentary traditions and which is carrying on the great national work unperturbed by the ceaseless calumny that is being carried on all around.

OUR ENEMIES

I have referred to the ceaseless activities of our opponents to misrepresent us ; on the platform and through the press they have been carrying on a sustained agitation against us always couched in those vague generalisations which are the safest methods of the arch-consipirators. They have accused us of not doing national work. They have levelled the charge against us of not following the principles of democracy ; they have stated that we have not made any improvements, that our councils have been merely registering the mandates of the bureaucracy, that our Ministers have been merely the instruments for carrying out the policy of the bureaucracy and that nothing good can come out of Israel. I propose to take up the challenge and to prove to the hilt that every one of these charges is a fabrication and a vile misrepresentation, that they who have made these charge know it to be so but have adopted them owing to the dire necessities of political warfare. What is the record of our Ministers and of our Legislative Council. I claim for them that they have tried in the short period of their existence to bring within the range of practical politics those questions which have been agitating the public for years.

WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED

You pleaded for mass education. You agitated time and again that the only way of improving the economic

and sanitary condition of the masses is by educating them. From the earliest days of political agitation in this country you placed the question of free and compulsory education in the foremost place. The late Gopalakrishna Gokhale, one of the greatest sons of India, introduced his famous Elementary Education Bill into the Imperial Council only to receive rebuffs from the bureaucracy and to sustain a defeat. From 1911 to 1920 you cried hoarse, every party, every phase of political thought in your congress, conferences, and confederations over this question of primary education. And then came your Councils and your Ministry. Within the space of hardly two years, thanks to the superhuman exertions of your Ministers and the willing co-operation of the Council you are able to say to-day that in the Municipalities the problem of free and compulsory education has been solved, and that in a number of rural areas, a great expansion of elementary education is in course of development. Does that in the party look undemocratic?

You took up the question of the Industrial regeneration of the country. You non-Brahmins in particular thought that political advancement without industrial expansion was a delusion and a snare. In innumerable conferences you passed resolutions urging that the State should take a more direct interest in Industrial expansions, that nascent industries should be nurtured by state subventions. Your Minister of industries is shortly introducing a Bill to provide for state aid to Industries which has had the approbation of every one interested in the Industrial development of the country and has made "The Bengalee," despair of its own province and its own Ministers. Does that in the party look anti-national?

You were very much exercised over the question of charitable endowments. You were considerably perturbed at the idea that through the agency of the courts the numerous charities which you non-Brahmins and your ancestors had donated were rapidly passing away from you. You were incensed at the activities of the Dharma

Rakshana Sabha or the Dharma Bakshana Sabah as you called it which came into the field with the result that your management changed to the management of Brahmins and vakils whose only claim was that they were disinterested persons in so far as they had not contributed a pie to the charity. I remember well the heated debates, the outburst of feeling on this question at your confederations. My honoured leader the Chief Minister is shortly introducing a Bill for the better organisation of religious and charitable endowments which will I trust redress substantially your grievances in the matter.

You agitated for permanent settlement. You deplored the constant revisions of settlement carried on by over-jealous settlement officers without any definite principles and with results which varied with the temperaments of the officers. You pointed out that land was too heavily taxed, that the peasant proprietor lost all interest in his holding owing to these repeated assessments, that there was really no fixity of tenure and that a system of repeated settlements of unknown denomination was a perpetual sword of democles hanging over the head of the impoverished peasant. You pleaded for the system of permanent settlement. Your council passed a resolution suggesting that permanent settlement should be introduced and I am not divulging any secrets when I say that the question is now under investigation by the Government of India, Meanwhile a Bill is ready fixing the principles of settlement at least and I trust that the Council will pass the Bill to the satisfaction of the people.

You asked that the functions of the magistrate should be separated from that of the police, you suggested that combination of judicial and executive functions in one individual was unknown in other parts of the civilized world, that it led to grave irregularities and to serious miscarriage of justice. Your council accepted the principle and a committee is shortly to sit to investigate the financial aspects of the scheme.

HIGHER EDUCATION.

You were anxious about the future of your youth, about facilities for higher education. You found that the premier institutions of the presidency maintained out of public funds hardly received any of your childern. You complained that your childern who probably were not so advanced as those of other communities to whom traditional training had made the examinations a matter of ease, required the tuition of first rate institutions more than the more advanced boys. You complained that the system by which the more distinguished boys were taken to the better equipped colleges and received better training and others went to third-rate institutions was hardly fair, that you were maintaining these institutions out of the taxes you paid and that your children ought to have the benefit of this training. Your council approved of the appointment of selection committees and if my information is correct the admissions this year have been more satisfactory to you than during the last ten years. You complained that the University was a close preserve, that it had no organic touch with the business and commercial life of the country, that latterly one particular class preponderated in the Councils of the Senate, that such preponderance had a blighting effect on you and your interests that your Vernaculars were neglected, that an invidious distinction was made between the classic language of the Dravidians and Sanskrit and you urged for the democratisation of the Senate. Your Council will shortly have before it a Bill for the reorganization of the University of Madras. You said that your movement was as much social as political. You emphasised the social aspect of the movement. You wished to remove the distinctions of caste, and the disabilties of sex. Within six months of the Reformed constitution your Council passed a resolution giving the franchise to women and at the next election women equally with men will exercise their vote and I do not doubt that they will exercise it well and truly. And last but not least, you agitated for the recognition of this

question of communal representation in the public services. You made it one of the main tenets of your creed. You gave it an honoured place in your programme. You telt that every community should have a right to take its proper and legitimate place in the services of the country. You felt that equal opportunities should be given to all to rise to distinction in the service of the King. Nor was your agitation merely for the loaves and fishes of office. I know ignorant critics and more often our enemies in their efforts to ridicule us, proclaim that the Non-Brahmin Party is only for appointments, that they have no other programme, no other party cry and no other object in view.

NO UNWORTHY MOTIVES.

You know no doubt that you are animated by no such unworthy motives. You could show that you have always had a much cleaner record than most of our opponents. You could tell them that you rarely used the honorary place of a public representative as a stepping stone for more substantial salaried offices. You could name dozens of individuals among our opponents of whom it may be said as of Browning's lost leader:

"Just for a handful of silver he left us,

Just for a ribbon to stick in his coat"

You could go further and show to the world instances among our opponents who used their position in the Legislative Assemblies to procure high appointments for their sons, their sons-in-law or their nephws for which they would be obviously unfit otherwise. And you could contrast these devious and improper methods with your own straightforward advocacy of your principle.

You would say further probably that it is not the mere attraction of filthy lucre that is making you, as a party, press for this question. And if it was your intention only to provide for the poor amongst you, not all the appointments in Government service nor even their number multiplied a hundred fold could provide for a tithe of your poor men. What then is the explanation?

Many of you are merchants or landlords who are well-to-do and can probably engage an army of youngsters yourselves. You fortunately are not reduced to such dire straights as to depend only on Government Service. In fact in the early days, you scorned government service. You said that ploughing your ancestral lands and attending to your ancient pursuits you were better off than the slave drudging at a Government desk. You dissuaded your youngmen from seeking service and sometimes even from educating himself. You said that if he could only retain his patrimony it would be enough and he could live in comfort for all time to come. And therein you made the greatest mistake of your lives. You found that your position, your ancestry, your wealth your charities were no protection against the irritations of the subordinate bureaucracy. You had to go on your bended knees perhaps before an ordinary Revenue Inspector or a petty Income-tax clerk. You found moreover you had to deal with a set of persons who had generally no sympathy with you. They were not agriculturists who could know the desolation that a draught or a partial rain creates in a farmer's home. They did not belong to the commercial classes who could know what devastation a slump in the market could make of one's business. And you then realised that, unless the great majority of these offices were manned by men who could understand your trials and tribulations who have lived your lives and known your difficulties you could not get a just or generous treatment at the hands of the Public servant. That was the" raison' 'detre' of a vast population crying hoarse over this question of Communal representation.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

What did your representatives do in the Council to carry out your wishes? Almost from the first day of the Councils this question has been prominently kept before the House. They have asked innumerable questions. They have repeatedly moved resolutions on this subject. My friend Mr. Thanickachalam Chettiar, one of the protaganists of communual agita-

tion, constantly returned to the charge. My friend Mr. Munisawmy Naidu, an equally sturdy fighter, moved resolutions after resolutions to vindicate the principle. Others in the Council and their number is legion took up this question time after time and pressed for a solution. We badgered them with questions. We worried them with resolutions. We made a positive nuisance of ourselves so far as the bureaucracy was concerned. The Leader of the House—I refer to the late leader jumped upon his feet more than once and deprecated these communal wrangles. The Hon'ble the Law Member spoke of Brahmins and brass farthings. Some of the permanent numbers of the services edged away from us and kept an uncomfortable silence while these questions were being raised. The opposition benches were not slow to take advantage of the situation. They ridiculed us. They made caustic remarks about birth being penalised, about talents being victimised. They appealed to our national instincts, an appeal which sounded most hollow from the lips of die-hards and monopolists. Nor was the press silent on the subject. Day after day, leaders, and leaders, communications, letters and speeches were and are still being published by the score criticising the most respected of our members because they are staunch fighters of our communal battles. But your representatives persevered in the face of all difficulties till at last the Government realised that the question must be solved in the interests of peace, and that Government order, which your Dravidian Association refers to, was issued, thanks to the indefatigable efforts of your councillors and the sympathy of the present leader of the House. We know our responsibilities. We were aware that most of us had given a pledge to our constituencies on this question, and unless we betrayed the trust we could not but pursue the question, and I do hope that we have solved the question satisfactorily.

MORAL VICTORY.

That, Sir, is a very short resume, of a few of the achievements of our legislative council and our Ministers.

They may well be claimed to be a worthy record of our great movement. But the subjective triumphs of our movement—its moral victories—are even more remarkable than its outward achievements. You have infused a new spirit into the non-Brahmins of this Presidency. You have infused a new enthusiasm into your brethren. You have made their hearts pulsate with new aspirations. You have placed before them a new and glorious vision of what their future may be. You have given them new ideas of civic duties and rights, you have awakened in them a new civic consciousness. You have placed before them lofty ideals of public duty and self-sacrifice. You have welded them into one organic whole moved by the same impulses, animated by the same feeling, swelling with the same emotions. Above all you have taught them how their goal can be reached by peaceful legitimate and constitutional means.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

Citizens of North Arcot, I have a quarrel to settle with you. I have told you something of what our members of council have been trying to do, of the difficulties they have had to face, of their achievements such as they are and I have tried to show to you how they have been constantly endeavouring to fulfil those pledges which they gave you when they sought your virgin franchise. I ask what your work has been during the last two years. How have you been promoting the cause, what sacrifices you have made and I think I have a right to ask an account of your activities. I may at once congratulate you on the representative whom you found for the Legislative Council in the President of your District Board, my honoured friend Mr. Vijiaraghava Mudaliar. He has been a tower of strength to our party, one of the strongest pillars of the Non-Brahmin cause in the local Council. There has been never an occasion when we could not rely, not indeed upon his passive support but upon his enthusiastic and active help. And I personally, let me freely express my gratitude, have found in him a real elder brother to whom, in moments of doubt and

despair, when I found my task of acting as a whip of the Party, flagging on my nerves, I could always look for help and advice and never failed to find in him a sincere colleague, a trusted brother and a loyal party man and friend. But what about your other representatives in the Legislative Council. Have you found in them true and staunch advocates of your cause, men who fight for the realisation of popular wishes, men who place before themselves the noble objective of carrying out the mandate of the people? Have you followed the proceedings of the Council? Have you read their speeches, given any attention to their activities, seen their work and judged how far they have fulfilled the trust you have reposed in them? Citizens of North Arcot you come to me and complain that much is not being done by the Party to promote the communal cause. You tell me that in your own district you have not advanced very far, that your Collectorate is still the stronghold of the monopolists. You tell me that there is despair creeping into the minds of these young non-Brahmins who have unfortunately taken to Government service. You ask me what we are going to do to remedy the evil to give you some more sympathetic offices; you exhort us in the Legeslative Council to see that the Government Orders are carried into effect.

Friends, I have shown to you what our members in the Council have tried to do and it is my turn now to ask what you have been doing, you non-Brahmins of North Arcot, you members of the South Indian Liberal Federation, you, who pride yourselves on being staunch 'justice party men. What has been your record? How have your activities been directed? What part have you attempted to play in bringing about the goal which we all have in view, the goal of equal opportunities to all, of justice to all?

YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Your representative, my friend, Dewan Bahadur L. A. Govindaraghva Ayyar gets up from his seat in the opposition benches and tells us whenever the question of communal representation is raised that he deprecates them, that the country is disgusted with these communal squab-

bles and that the Legislative Council should be kept sacred from these polluting quarrels. He claims to be your accredited representative returned by the united will of a free and enlightened electorate like yourselves. Is it a question of selection committees for the colleges which my friend Mr. Muniswami Naidu is agitating for. Your representative is aghast at the very idea and deprecates the selection committees giving preference to non-brahmins. Who is in the right, who is in the wrong? Which individual represents the views of the electors? Whose voice echoes the mandate of the people? And you, my enthusiastic friends, you citizens of North Arcot who cry hoarse on communal question, you who cry shame now in the backwoods of your districts, what have you done to ensure that your views are being respected. Have you I ask again followed these proceedings. Have you called upon your representatives to account for their trust? Have you held meetings in any part of the district asking the gentlemen to explain his conduct if he was going counter to your wishes? Have you required of the honourable member to resign his seat if he can no longer voice your wishes in these matters? Have you tried to censure his conduct? Have you anywhere at any gathering passed a vote of want of confidence on your representative who has flouted your whishes and acted distinctly contrary to your wishes? If you have done none of these things, if you have sat vegetating all this time, nursing your petty troubles and crooning over the ill-luck of this or that non-brahmin who has had the not unusual misfortune of having been passed over by a junior monopolist, if you have been too busy in fighting amongst yourselves and throwing mud on yourselves, if this is the record of your public work, your contribution for the cause, for the Party, then I ask again in all seriousness are you the persons to ask us what we have been able to do in the Councils for the non-brahmin cause But brethren, I am perhaps unfair and unjust to you. I have not come here to day to upbraid you, to censure you. You are my brothern, aye my non-brahmin brethren, you are flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone and how can I think of saying ought in malice against

you or of castigating you for your mistakes. If you have erred in the past I have no doubt it was purely in ignorance and I have only to point it out to you, and you will in future do your duty. The explanation must lie in the fact that parliamentary system of Government is new to us all. We do not yet realise what our rights and duties are. We are yet to learn what close relationship must subsist between the representative and the electorate. We have yet to conceive of the fundamental principle that by the exercise of our vote we are conferring a great privilege and that a corresponding duty is cast on the representative who has to focus the wishes of the electorate in the Legislative Council. We have yet to establish parliamentary precedents among us whereby an electorate can always call upon a representative to explain his conduct and can force him to resign, by moral pressure, when he finds himself unable to agree to the views of the electorate. And it is the novelty of the whole procedure that is really responsible for your supposed neglect of duty.

AGENTS OF GOVERNMENT

Friends, in one of the addresses presented to the Raja Sahib this evening you refer to the Government order that has been recently issued and you hope that the agents of the Government who have been entrusted with the carrying out of the order may observe it in letter and in spirit. I admit quite frankly that a great deal depends on the agents of Government. Your representatives may pass resolutions by the score, Government may issue orders by the dozen, but the ultimate result will and must depend on these officers who carry out these executive instructions loyally and cheerfully. You have therefore to convert them, you have to convince them that your cause is just, that it is not merely the dead weight of numbers that has enabled you to carry out your proposition in the Council. You have to appeal to their sense of fair play, of equity, of justice and you have to show to them that the people are united in these demands, that it is the path as much of duty as of wisdom to concede these requests. Above all you have to show to them that

as people steeped in constitutional precedents, as men who have realised in the affairs of their own country that the united voice of a people is the highest voice of reason and that such voice can only be heard through the elected representatives of the people, they should respect the wishes of the Councils of the land. But there comes the doubt whether you do represent the wishes of the people and if you do whether you will continue to do so.

A FREAK OF NATURE

I do not know why I should talk in parables and whether after all a little bit of plain talk may not be for the best. Take the Europeans in this country, official and non-official. They say that they are neither Brahmins nor non-Brahmins, they say that they belong to neither party and do not wish to take part in these controversies. They are told moreover that this communal agitation is only temporary, that it does not reflect the opinion of the country and that it is the work of a few half-educated young men. Our opponents have assured them that the last elections were a freak of nature, that non-Brahmins came in such large numbers at the last polls by a mere accident, that there is a revulsion of feeling against them in the country, that a division based on caste cannot subsist long and that the next elections will ensure an altogether different result. They do not know really—some of them at least—which version is correct. I am not drawing on my imagination. I have got the very best authority to tell you that one of your representatives in the Legislative Assembly told the Right Hon'ble Earl Winterton at a private interview, that the Legislative Councils and the Ministry in Madras stood self-condemned, that the latter were the most unpopular in the whole of India and that every one in Southern India was disgusted with the work of the new councils. Such misrepresentation is going on in public and in private, in the press and on the platform and the Europeans do not really understand where they stand on these questions and whether next year they may not be called upon to reverse their orders.

Therefore my friends, your work will not even end with convincing them of the justice of your claims. You have to go a step further. You have to look to the future. You have to ensure the stability of the principles that have been laid down. You have to give a guarantee that the party now in the majority in the Council will continue to command that majority in the future councils. You have to convince them that as far as they could look ahead the non-Brahmin party will be the party in power and then alone you can expect every one of them to carry out your wishes in these matters.

BESTIR YOURSELF

Have you done everything to ensure this result? Is your association the South Indian Liberal Federation bestirring itself in this direction? You have hardly a year before you. Next year by this time you will be in the throes of a severe election campaign. I do not want you to minimise the coming fight, to be too sanguine of success, to lay the flattering unction to your soul that you are invincible, that you stand justified by your work anb the purity of your motives before the country and that you are therefore unconquerable. The wise man while he is courageous and bold yet takes all necessary precautions and would not allow himself to be caught napping. Awake, arise and stop not till the goal is reached. It is not in the present councils that you can achieve a great many of your objects Remember that we came in absolutely new to the task, we had to make traditions of our own, we had to work in harmony with the existing Government and both of us, the popular Ministry and the permanent bureaucracy, had to practice a great deal of give and take that the Reforms may not be a failure. The first year of the ministry was merely a year of preparation, of acquiring very necessary knowledge which not a score of years of Congress and Conference training could give. The second year is seeing the maturing of a few schemes, the third will see their fruition. But it is in the next councils that the real task can be accomplished. It is then when sound

traditions have been established, when the idea of the Ministry controlling the executive has become fairly familiar that our most coveted reforms can be carried out. I ask you therefore to see to it that you ensure the return of even a larger majority in the next council if you are earnest and sincere in the goal that you have put forward.

THE CALL OF DUTY

And that goal is not altogether unworthy of your best endeavours. In fighting for that goal we have already shed the most costly blood even in foreign lands Does not the voice of the departed speak to you? Do you not hear the clarion call of duty? Does not the idea of elevating your countrymen, of making the oppressed and depressed the downtrodden masses rise to the full stature of manhood, of instilling into them ideas of loyalty to God, crown and country stir you up into enthusiasm? Does it not make your blood pulsate more quickly? Are you not consumed with the desire to serve a great democratic cause? Does the very thought of the coming conflict make your blood course faster? Does it give you sleepless nights and restless days to think of how you can circumvent the mendacity of your opponents? Then only can our cause be blessed with success. Would that I had the eloquence to stir your enthusiasm, would that I had the fervour, the missionary zeal to make converts of you. If I could make even half a dozen young men of Vellore ardent converts of the cause, men who will go mad over its ideals, its tenets and its goal, I should have done my duty. But my tongue is all too weak and my language all too poor to do justice to the cause. If I may use the language which Virgil put into the mouth of Sybil.

'Had I a hundred mouths, a hundred tongues
A voice of Brass and adamantine lungs'

I should still have felt that it was all too insufficient to expound to you the gloy of the great cause and the

infinite potentialities of good which it possesses. But I am painfully conscious how ill fitted I am to convey the message of our great leaders to you, how unsuited to expound the great truths of our movement. For what am I in the political world but an infant.

An infant crying in the night
An infant crying for the light
And with no language but a cry.

A NOBLER HERITAGE.

Friends, I am afraid I have detained you too long and exhausted your patience. I had intended to tell you something of our programme of work for the next council but the hour is late and I am afraid I must leave that to another occasion. I have tried to show what the future has in store for you if you will do your duty, how boundless its possibilities are and if you believe that you should bequeath to your children and your children's children a richer and nobler heritage than has fallen to your lot, you will know wherein lies your duty and your work. One word more and I have done. Of late I have seen faint tendencies here and thereof creating differences amongst ourselves, of emphasising distinctions where possibly none exist, of trying to create ill-feeling in the ranks where all has been harmony and trust hitherto. Shall we who pride ourselves on being unselfish workers give room to such nefarious activities? Our opponents have not been slow to take advantage of the situation. They speak with glee of the fissiparous tendencies that are creeping into the Party. They say that we are ourselves driven by inter-communal and sub-communal jealousies. They say that sectarianism has free play within the Party itself and they paint with triumph and satisfaction that there is dissatisfaction in the party itself, that one caste gets more of the worldly advantages than another. Will you justify these criticisms or will you prove them to be false? What matters it to me whether it is an Andra Ministry or a Tamil Ministry so long as they are my non-Brahmin brethren? What care

I if a Naidu gets a high office and not a Mudaliar? What does it matter to me if a Pillai secures a good berth and not a Reddy. Am I so narrow minded, so selfish such a poor believer in the good of the movement that I would be goaded to jealousy by the cunning of my enemy? And do I not realise that within the two years that have elapsed there have been only a handful of appointments to go round and that every caste and sub-caste and division could not well find a place in these posts? And after all is it not my aim that no community should monopolise all the posts and have I any reason to think that so far there has been any display of a tendency to such monopoly? Am I so dense, so stupid, so lost to all reason as to think that in the course of two short years every sect and sub-sect could find a place in the services salaried or honorary of the Presidency and shall I not wait with patience, with fortitude and above all with trust and that abiding faith which is the test of all sincerity, hoping that in the not distant future every one will come by his own. My young friends, I ask you to have that trust and that faith. I ask you not to be carried away by paid hirelings or mercenaries egged on by our opponents to sow the seeds of dissension amongst us by appealing through the columns of an inimical press to our lowest passions. I know you are above it all but I would warn you still for the devious and tortuous ways of our opponents who are countless as the sands of the desert.

CONCLUSION

Now I am afraid I must really come to a close. As I told you at the start the future is a sealed book for me but I know what my duty is and what I should do to ensure a bright future. The mandate of my leaders, I have merely to obey; I know not what the future has in store for us. "To work we have the right but not the fruits thereof" says Lord Sri Krishna on the field of battle to Pandava's son. 'It is not in mortals to command success but Horatio let us deserve it' said the Western sage. I who form the rearguard of an advancing host, I who am but the camp

follower of great leaders, I have hardly the right to look too deeply into the future. In the words of the great Cardinal Newman, I could only say.

Lead kindly light amid the encircling gloom, Lead thou me on.

The night is dark and I am far from home, Lead thou me on.

Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see the distant path; one step is enough for me.

NON-BRAHMIN PARTY ELECTION CAMPAIGN

THE WORK OF THE PARTY IN THE COUNCIL

A VIGOROUS PLEA FOR THE RETURN OF THE PARTY

Ms. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, B.A., B L., M. L. C., Council Secretary, delivered a lecture at the Town Hall, Trichinopoly, on Sunday at 6 p. m. on the "Non-Brahmin Party and the Coming Elections" The hall was packed and the audience was throughout appreciative and listened carefully to the lecture which lasted over two and a half hours. The meeting was presided over by Mr. S. Appudaswami Udayar, M. L. C., and among those present were Prince K. S. Dorai Raja, Dewan Bahadur M. C. T. Petthachi Chettiar, Messrs. V. P. Pakkiriswami Pillai, Thangavelu Pillai (Rao Sahib), M. L C., A. R Manikka Mudaliar, S. M. Rajaram Rao (Rao Sahib), S. K. Devasikhamani, Thamba Mudaliar, Chinnaswami Udayar, Srinivasa Mudaliar of Parry & Co., Pancharatnam Pillai, A. R. Sivanandam of Karur and T. N. G. Murti. There were also several Brahmin gentlemen present including many prominent vakils of the place.

The Chairman, in his introductory remarks, said that the learned lecturer needed hardly any introduction to them. He was known to be a gifted speaker, and as

Council Secretary he had intimate knowledge of the work of the party and of the Ministers. The lecturer would tell them what they had been able to do during the last two and a half years. He was sure that they would listen with interest and admiration to the lecturer.

THE LECTURE

Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, who on rising received an ovation, spoke as follows:—

Mr. President and Friends,—I am afraid the Chairman has done me a disservice in introducing me to you in the very generous terms in which he has done and raising in you expectations which I must confess are doomed to be unfulfilled. I do not pretend to either eloquence or any very great powers of persuasion, but such facts as I am in possession of, I shall gladly place at your disposal and my strength will mainly lie in the fact that the cause that I represent is a just one, and that in reviewing the work of the party no painter's brush is required to give it false and alluring colours.

We have often been described, Sir, as the "party in power," a phrase which we are not very much enamoured of, but one which has been so constantly used by our opponents and has come to possess such a definite significance that we have come to use it ourselves now. But, Sir, if by the 'party in power,' is meant one which dominates the entire Government, if you mean thereby a party which can always enforce its will, in matters of principle and even in matters of detail, I am afraid, Sir, the description is not quit accurate In some instances at least, as I shall presently show, we have been "the party, in powerlessness" I prefer to call our party the majority party and in that sense, Sir, I claim for our party whatever good has come out of the Council and out of the system of reformed Government.

COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION

I do not think I need trace at this stage, the early history of our movement, of the struggles that we had to go through, of the singleness of purpose with which our two

great leaders, the late Dr. Nair, and Sir P. Theagaraya Chettiar laboured for us, and the great sacrifices that they have made for uplifting us. Nor need I tell you how ours was the only party which put forward the great principle of communal representation for the non-Brahmin classes as a definite means of attaining our goal of a united nation, and how through storm and stress, through good report and through evil, through back sliding and treachery, we kept up the fight and carried it to a foreign shore, and we vindicated that principle, at least in a modified degree, thanks tot he fairmindedness of the joint-committee. To-day, Sir, the cause once cursed by a hostile press, the slogan once derided by our advanced politicians, the principle once scorned by our nationalist opponents, is the cause, the slogan and the principle of the whole of India. Turn your eyes east, north, south or west, look wherever you like, cast your gaze not on benighted Madras, but on liberal Bombay or advanced United Provinces or nationalist Punjab, and tell me whether you do not come across this 'vicious principle,' this hateful idea of communal representation. Have not the warrior-races the Maharattas of Maharashtra the non-Brahminsof the Bombay presidency, come into line with us, and do they not now acknowledge that their trust in liberalism is misplaced and did they not the other day decline to join with the moderate Brahmins and preferred to have a platform of their own? Does not the Punjab present the same spectacle of Hindus and Muhammadans, after having gone through the pretensions of a united people, finding that safety, political progress and nationality itself depends upon the rights of each party being safeguarded through communal representation. 'Equal opportunities to all' is to-day the most universally accepted, and the only platform towards political progress. But unfortunately in our presidency this principle has not yet openly been accepted by our opponents and impediments are being placed in the way of national progress by pinchbeck politicians who talk big about imperial politics.

LAST ELECTIONS AND AFTER

In the last elections, thanks to the atrocious award of Lord Meston and thanks to the rallying cry raised by our leader Sir Chettiar, we found, probably to the agreeable surprise of some of our own men, and certainly to the bewilderment of our opponents that we were the foremost party in the Council and commanded an overwhelming majority. His Excellency Lord Willingdon, true to parliamentary traditions, brought up as he has been under the shadow of the Speaker's chair, and gifted with an unerring instinct for political constitutionalism, nominated three Ministers from our party, and it is of the work of that party and those Ministers that I propose to speak to you to-night. You are all aware, gentlemen, of the frantic efforts that are being made by a bitterly hostile press to discredit this party and to discount its work. They say that we have not advanced national ideals, that we have retarded the progress of the country, that we have not been very keen on furthering the ideals of liberty and freedom, and that ours has been merely a party fighting for loaves and fishes of office, that we have not made the country's cause ours, that the cry of the masses has not been echoed by us in the Council hall, and that we have merely carried out the behests of the bureaucracy, dotted their 'i's and crossed their 't's. If there were an iota of truth in these charges, if there was any basis for any of these charges, if it could be brought home to an unprejudiced judge that the party has been or could be proved to be guilty of any of these accusations, I am willing to go into 'sackcloth and ashes' in a political sense. If, on the other hand, I am able to prove that every one of these charges is baseless, if I am able to establish that our party has been the only party that has stood constant through all the fleeting and evanescent emotionalism of the past few years, unperturbed by threats and unmoved by cajolery, with the single aim of promoting the happiness of the masses and furthering the cause of political progress; if I could prove to you that in spite of

being temporarily misunderstood, we have steadfastly withstood the temptation to forego our political principles just to gain a little popularity for the nonce; if I could show you that we have more solid work to our credit that any other party in any other presidency, whether working in the Council or outside it, that our Ministers have a better and weightier record of glorious work fearlessly carried out to help the cause of the people—then I shall be justified in asking you, Sir, to give your unstinted support to such a party and send them back—not indeed with the same majority for that is but a small thing, but in far greater numbers, more united and more closely knit together to fight the common cause which will ultimately redound to the glory as much of the party as of the country.

RETRENCHMENT COUNCIL.

One of the first questions taken up by the party in the Council was the question of the financial position of the province. We felt that, thanks to the lavish revision of salaries both in the Imperial and in the Provincial services, thanks to a policy pursued in the pre-reform days in some departments at least of creating posts galore without much thought of the cost incident thereto, the administration of the country was becoming too burdensome financially to carry it along. And as representatives of the masses, as people pledged to guard the interests of the millions, we felt that unless a strong effort, a mighty and united effort was made to retrench and economise, we should come a cropper over the financial stability of our province. Mr. Micawbor's classical example of the ruin that would stare us if our expenditure exceeded our income by a penny was prominently before us, and the Council without fear and without favour tackled this question of retrenchment. In fact the first Council has been rightly termed the Retrenchment Council.

Read the budget discussions of the last three years, the motions that were carried out and note the strong and persistent pressure that has been applied to make the administrators overhaul their departments and examine their

individual budgets. If you had followed the discussions you would have noticed how in the transferred departments economies of a far reaching character have been carried out, how the cost of the administration has been reduced, and how without prejudice to efficiency a policy of rigid retrenchment has been worked out. In the Education Department a costly inspectorate had been replaced by a less expensive staff. In the Public Works Department, in spite of the fact that it has been a thankless and none too pleasant task, the Minister has reduced the cadre of the services right from the very top abolishing the highest and the lowest posts from Superintending Engineers down to draughtsmen, and has brought the strength of the service into greater harmony with the actual requirements. In the Medical Department the same sort of economy has been carried and so in the Development Department. In the Judicial Department the Council has, by reducing the grants, attempted to economise in the number of courts, but owing to agitation in particular localities and in deference to the opinjon of the High Court these cuts had to be restored. In the Police Department retrenchments are contemplated and a committee is at work for suggesting economy. So it has been in the Revenue, Forest and other departments and lastly a special Retrenchment Committee has been at work and has made a number of proposals, though not always very well-considered ones. Is that the record of a Council which does not consider the welfare of the masses and if the Council had not taken up the question what would have happened but additional taxation forced upon the people, if not with the aid of the Council, by the process of certification at least?

INDIANISATION OF SERVICES

Let us look again at another aspect of the work of the Council and of the Ministers. You hear a great deal about the Indianisation of the services and even the non-co-operation section of the press has laid the greatest stress on the question of Indianisation. One of the resolutions

which was discussed in the Legislative Assembly with the greatest vehemence related to this question of Indianisation. 1, Sir, personally I do not attach that supreme importance to this question which in some quarters it has attained, nor do I think that the political millenium of the country would be reached through a solution of this question. I yield to none in my desire to see Indianisation because economy dictates that policy and, secondly, because Indians have to be trained in the higher offices. But I realise that the line of real progress lies in capturing the seat that dictates policy, in getting under popular control the very fountain source and not in merely taking charge of the conduit pipes. I believe that we shall advance far more rapidly and more truly towards *swaraj* by getting all subjects transferred to the control of Ministers working through a partially European agency than by having a European cabinet to dictate policy and getting it carried through a purely Indian agency. This is purely a personal belief, but what has been our record even on this question which is deemed to be the touchstone of nationalism. In the Educational Department one has only to compare the number of Indians in the superior service at the beginning of the Reforms and to-day to be convinced of the fact that the Indianisation problem has been solved to a degree which has never been reached in any other province. Look again at the Public Works Department. Both the Chief Engineers are Indian and the senior of them is one who is an Indian recruited officer. Both the Under Secretaries to Government are Indians and with an Indian Minister in charge of Public Works one may well rub one's eyes in wonder and amazement at the idea that at the head of the Department is a purely Indian staff. Will my nationalist friends compare it with conditions existing in 1920 when the whole of the staff, the Hon'ble Member in charge, Sir Lionel Davidson, both the Chief Engineers, the Deputy Secretary and Under Secretary were all Europeans, and will they still say that we non-Brahmins have not carried out such vital policies with as much earnestness as the greatest of their patriots? Nay more, I claim

that we have done more solid work than any other Ministry in any other Presidency and have done it in our own silent and unostentatious way without proclaiming it from housetops, and without the fanfare and blare of trumpets. And nay, I say, sir, here to those who feel that that India is unfit for advancement, to those who believe in the steel frame and the mailed fist and to the jingo-publicists of this and other provinces, that the heavens have not fallen nor the sun declined to rise in the east because forsooth an important department like the Public Works is entirely guided by Indian talent. Take again the Medical Department with its interminable complications arising out of the quasi-military nature of its superior staff and judge for yourself of the invaluable services rendered to the cause of Indianisation by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister. It is a record of which any Minister can well be proud and I would only urge you to go through the quarterly civil list to see how thoroughly the cause of provincial men has been upheld by the Hon'ble Minister, supported as he has been throughout by a noble-minded conscientious and just Governor. Could you show another province in which the conditions are anywhere near those of Madras? You may have nationalists or moderates or liberals or congress men or even non-co-operators as Ministers. But I am fairly confident that in no other province have they been able to accomplish as much. The same is the case in the Department of industries and Agriculture, the Hon'ble Minister having as good a record with regard to this question of Indianisation. But these are not our greatest achievements. We as a party have stood for popular rights and for vindicating popular privileges.

PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

You have all heard of the question of permanent settlement. It has agitated the public mind for over fifty years. From the very first congress down to 1918 this has been one of the demands of the Congress—permanent settlement. Year after year resolutions were passed demanding that land revenue should be put on a permanent basis, that periodical revisions were doing havoc, that re-

peated settlements were really unsettling the people, that individual incentive to improve the land was taken away by the vicious system and that security of tenure on fixed terms was one of the first essentials for a contented people. We took up this question in right earnest from the very beginning of our councils. The district of Bellary, always a famine zone and not a land of peace or plenty, was again overrun by famine. The settlement operations had been concluded and the revision was about to be given effect to. We passed a resolution to postpone it first by one year and then again by another Was that an act which was intended to injure the masses ? Nor did we stop there. By an overwhelming majority we decided that till the principles of settlement were embodied in a Bill no settlement operation should be given effect to and later still we resolved that the principle of permanent settlement should be introduced into this Presidency. Is that a record justifying the criticism that the interests of the masses are not being considered by the Council.

THE FOREST GRIEVANCES

Do you want further illustrations of the solicitude of the party towards the masses, their anxiety to remove grievances which were of age-long duration and were not very seriously taken notice of by our nationalist patriots. The administration of the Forest Department, its rigid rules, its method of fines and penalties, its interference with grazing rights, its policy of reservation of forests and disafforestation was long the subject of criticism, but one which the patriot impatient to attain *swaraj* hardly had the time to deal with. Even in the pre-Reform age it was left to a non-Brahmin to make himself the champion of such an unpoetic cause. But however abstruse, however devoid of sensationalism, it was a subject which lay very near the heart of the villagers. My friend Mr. B. Muniswami Naidu, is a member of the Legislative Council whose knowledge of public grievances is not solely derived from the '*Hindu*' and the '*Swarajya*'. He had an intimate knowledge of village

life and knew the difficulties and struggles of the villagers with an intimacy which few could boast of. He raised the question of forest grievances and at his instance the council carried resolution after resolution condemning the policy of forest administration, advocating that more forests should be disafforested, that grazing ground should be more largely given to the villagers, that the policy of reserving forests in close proximity to the villages should be discontinued, and that a more humane policy should be pursued in forest administration. My friend Mr. Thanikachelam Chettiar returned to the charge again in his budget discussion and showed how the so-called forest offences were being punished in this presidency. He compared the amount of fines and penalties collected in the provinces with what is collected elsewhere and proved that while in the United Provinces with its forest revenue of over 2 crores the fines did not amount to more than Rs. 20,000, in Madras with its revenue of a little over 50 lakhs the fines amounted to over 2 lakhs of rupees. This vigorous fight carried by the council in the forest administration led to a considerable change of policy and an Advisory Board has been associated with the Hon'ble Member in charge of the administration. Let me, however, remind you that the subject of forests is a reserved department and that the resolutions of the council are not absolutely binding on the Government. I claim that we have brought steady pressure to bear on the Government and have done our bit to help the masses.

COMPULSORY ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Take again the question of free and compulsory elementary education. In the Halcyon days of the congress when the great Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was its guiding spirit and the late Mr. Gokhale was listened to with respect and admiration, when the Congress could still be said to represent educated Indian opinion, before it was captured by fire-eaters, long before the time when Konda Venkatappiahs could be dreamt of

as Presidents of the Congress Committee, the question of free, compulsory, elementary education was one of the main cries of the Congress. From 1885 down to 1916, you will find the Congress, year after year, passing this resolution requesting the Government to attain this goal by gradual means. The late Mr. Gokhale introduced his famous Bill for free elementary education in 1911 in the Imperial Legislative Council and was unfortunately not successful. The cause of such education is intimately connected with the masses. What has been our record on this most vital of all questions? Within two years of the reformed Government, we have had a vast expansion of elementary education and, thanks to the vigorous policy pursued by the Minister, in 14 out of 80 Municipalities we have the system of free and compulsory education now working, and we have ten more cases pending examination which I hope will come into effect before the year is out, so that within three years of our coming into power a third part of the urban area would be under this system of free, compulsory, elementary educotion. Again in rural areas we have realised that compulsion cannot immediately come and that expansion is what we should aim at. And as a result of this conclusion and, thanks again to the vigorous policy pursued by the Educational authorities, nearly seventy of the 128 Taluk Boards, have levied an educational cess and with the help of the equivalent Government grant, are able to embark on a large programme of educational expansion. In my own district of Chingleput, the municipality of Conjeeveram has introduced Free and Compulsory Education, and all the Taluk Boards have levied the education cess. Is this a record, I ask you, of which we non-Brahmins need be ashamed. Look at the sister-provinces. Bombay boasts of an eminent Educationist, a Senior Wrangler, in its Education Minister, the Hon'ble Mr. R. P. Paranjpye, Can Bombay boast of half a dozen municipalities where elementary education has been introduced? The other day at Madras the Head Masters of the Presidency sat in solemn conclave, and the united wisdom of this body was given expression to by its President

who said that the educational salvation of the country could only be reached through an educationist being the Minister. If that were the case, Bombay should by now be the land of the elect. Let us look at another province which has not the same bad record as benighted Madras where the retrograde non-Brahmins are in power. Till recently, in the United Provinces those shining lights of liberalism, the inspiring examples so often quoted in "*New India*", Messrs. Chintamoni and Jagat Narain, were the Ministers of that Province. What, I ask, is the achievement of this splendid Ministry in the field of Free and Compulsory Education? How many municipalities have had the same introduced and what progress has been made in rular areas? And is it any better where that advanced politician and Congressman, Lala Harikrishna Lal, is the Minister. No, Sir, you may extend your vision from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, but yon will not find another province with the same record in the field of elementary education as benighted Madras with its retrograde non-Brahmin party.

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES

Let us look at the work of another department, the Department of Industries. You are aware that the industrial regeneration of the country is one of the most pressing problems of the country. You know how allied with the Congress was the movement to improve the industrial condition of the country, and that, side by side with the Congress of old, Industrial Conferences were held annually at which stock was taken of the resources of the country and a programme of expansion of industries chalked out. Our leaders, and none so well as Sir P. Theagaraya Chettiar, had realised and had given expression to the view, that political advancement would be a fraud, a delusion and a snare if the country stagnated so far as its industries were concerned. Himself. an industrialist taking for over forty years a keen interest in the industrial regereration of the country, our leader had realised that unless the wealth of the country was aug-

mented through its industries, the masses of our countrymen could not be enfranchised from their economic bondage. The financial drain on the country through its imports was appalling, and any one who had bestowed a moment's thought on the subject realised that in the present state of the financial equilibrium of the world, a purely agricultural country could not hope to come to the forefront. And we, non-Brahmins, we who are supposed to represent the masses, we were most keenly interested in this problem. Is it any wonder then that the Minister of Development took this problem of the development of industries seriously and has bestowed an amount of careful thought over the subject which reflects the greatest credit on him? He was handicapped in a dozen ways. I need only mention to you how while agriculture is a transferred subject, irrigation is untouched by ministerial hands, how while industries is a transferred subject, factories are reserved, and how the Industries Department is protected from electric shock by making electricity a reserved subject, and how again a subject as intimately connected with industries as labour, its organisation, the formation of trade unions, is under a different administration. With all these defects and drawbacks, we have forced ahead our schemes for industrial expansion and one of the most tangible proofs of our solicitude is the "State-Aid-to Industries Act" which we have put on the Statute Book. By judicious state aid and state subventions we hope to further the development of nascent industries so that in time to come our country may be second to none in its industrial activity. Does that look as if the party in power was not nationalistic in its aims or did not care for the interests of the masses? Show me any one province, where there are supposed to be such a galaxy of stars of the first magnitude adorning the ministerial seats—another province with a record such as this. Does it surprise you to learn that more than one province has asked for a copy of the act so that they may base their legislation on similar lines?

REORGANISATION OF UNIVERSITY

There is much more that I desire to tell you of our work and of the achievements of our party but the hour is late and I must reserve my remarks to another lecture. I may tell you something of what has been done in the cause of communal representation, of the fight that has been put by our members in the council, of the G. O's that have been issued (howsoever they may be disregarded in practice), of the revolution that has been created in local self-govern ment, thanks to the impetus given to non-Brahmins by our party and their policy. I may tell you of the solid work done by us in that most vital of problems, the reorganization of the Madras University, its democratization and the harnessing of University life for the material and moral advancement of the country. Speaking in Trichinopoly and under the presidency of our chairman I suppose I must speak with bated breath about the University Bill, but I may assure you without fear of contradiction that, howso-ever we might have differed on matters of detail, the Hon'ble Minister and we of the Ministerial Party were as solicitous of the interests of the moffusil institutions and tried our best not to introduce a single provision calculated to injure the growth of education in the moffusil, as the most enthusiastic sopporters of moffusil colleges. And now that the Act is an accomplished fact, may I not appeal to you all to co-operate and so work it as to redound to the credit of this Presidency and the benefit of all Institutions alike.

As I said before. gentlemen, my time is short and if I begin a subject like the Religious Endowments Bill it will take me several hours to deal with it. That is a piece of legislation which succeeding generations will, I am sure, bless us for, in no uncertain terms. Thanks to the firmness and determination of our Chief Minister and the generous support given by His Excellency, we hope ere long to place on the statute book a measure of the most far-reaching nature and one which is bound to give a fresh impetus to the cause of Hindu religion.

SEND THE PARTY BACK TO POWER

One word more and I have done, I have attempted to place before you a very short 'resume' of our work. I am conscious, more than any one else, that we have not done all that has to be done and that a great deal yet remains. But we have been actuated by right motives and right principles, by the desire to serve the country and by the determination, even at the risk of temporary unpopularity, to stand by the real people and to fight for the true progress of the country. Some of you might think that we have fallen short of your expectations, that we might have done more, that we might have fought for a more vigorous policy of communal representation, or that we might have accleerated the pace of Reform. To such my only answer is—It is possible you may be right, but can you conceive of any other party which would do more, nay, which could have done even so much. That is the test, the comparative test by which parties have to be judged and if that test is applied I am confident there can be but one answer. Citizens of Trichinopoly, I appeal to you then to send back the party to power which has done so much for you, in order that they may do more and complete that task which they have just begun. I ask you to send them back to mark your appreciation of what they have done in the past and to express your hope that through them alone more could be done. I have not come to plead for individuals but for the party, and to that pleading you cannot possibly turn a deaf ear. The elections are coming and what better thing can you do than to send non-Brahmins back to power? I hear a voice cry "in greater number", quite right, certainly in greater numbers and what is far more important, more united, more knit to each other, bound together by the party hoops of steel and realising that in union lies our strength. Am I to repeat to this cultured audience the parable of the bundle of faggots, which, bound to, was not possible to break, but which individually could be smashed to pieces? Am I to remind these learned gentlemen of the fable of the hands and mouth that non-co-operated with the

stomach and almost brought on disaster to all. I feel that such advice is hardly necessary and that the combined wisdom of you all will stand the country in good stead and will see that this party once more dominates in the councils of the country. (Prolonged Cheers.)

After a few concluding remarks from the chair the meeting dispersed.

THE COMING ELECTIONS

AN ENTHUSIASTIC MEETING AT TANJORE

MESSAGE FROM SIR P. T. CHETTIAR

III

Under the auspices of the South Indian Liberal Federation, Tanjore, a well-attended and enthusiastic meeting of the citizens was held on Wednesday, the 18th instant, at 5-30 p.m., in the Krishna Vilas Theatre Hall, when Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, Council Secretary, delivered a stirring address on tho coming elections. Rao Bahadur V. A. Vandayar, M. L. C., presided.

The Chairman, in his opening speech, said that Mr. Mudaliar needed no introduction to them as he had addressed public meetings at Tanjore on previous occasions. He was glad that the lecturer had found time to go over to their place, and to give them a message from his lord and leader, Sir P. Theagaraya Chettiar. The elections were fast approaching and they would all like to hear what their leader had to say and to listen to the eloquent speech of Mr. Mudaliar, and he would therefore call upon the lecturer to deliver the message of their great leader.

THE LECTURE

Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar then spoke as follows :—

Revered President and Citizens of Tanjore,—I stand before you to-night to deliver, in the language of your Chairman, a message from the great leader of the non-

Brahmin Party, at whose feet I have sat and learnt what little I know of politics, that white-robed figure whose striking personality has been mainly responsible for the development of our movement during the last three years, and whose devoted services to the cause of the country in conjunction with our late revered leader, Dr. Nair, has brought about this great democratic movement. It is but an accident, Sir, that I have been privileged to communicate to you the message of the father of our movement.

OUR GREAT LEADER

"Tell them," says our great leader, "that the elections are fast approaching and that it is time for the non-Brahmins to gird up their loins and begin the fight again. Tell them that we have done very well indeed so far, whatever hostile critics may say, and that we are destined to do greater things in the coming years. Give them an idea of the work that has been accomplished by the party and the Ministers, make them realise under what difficulties and against what obstacles we have been able to achieve, to some extent at least, our objects during the last two years, and tell them clearly to realise that our hopes for the future lie in the continued domination of the non-Brahmin Party in the Council of the land, and that under any other alternative, there will be such a serious set-back that we shall never again be able to rise and occupy our proper position in the public life of the country. Tell them, finally, that I have perfect faith in the wisdom of my countrymen and that I am confident we shall be returned to the councils in greater strength than before." That in short, Sir. is the message that I have to deliver to you, and it is in accordance with the command of my leader that I have started on this electioneering tour, and have taken the liberty of addressing public meetings at various centres in this Presidency. Not that I am for a moment confident that I am capable of fulfilling the task entrusted to me, not that for a moment I feel that there are not a hundred others at least, with greater knowledge and insight into political problems and with better persuasive powers,

but, Sir, even as the squirrel which helped to build the great Sri Rama's Bridge, I, as a humble individual second to none only in zeal for the cause, have thought perhaps foolishly that I too may contribute my little mite for the promotion of the cause.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PARTY

It was only the other day that I had the privilege of addressing a large audience at Trichinopoly on the subject of the coming elections. I told them something of the work which the Party and the Ministers have been able to do, of the measures which they have been able to introduce and place on the Statute Book, of the nnmber of resolutions which we have carried tending to promote the welfare of the people, of the administratlve work that has been done by our Ministers in the cause of the education of the masses, in the cause of sanitation and promotion of public health and of giving medical relief, and in the cause of the development of the agricultural and industrial resources of the country. I told my audience at Trichinopoly, Sir, further that, thanks to the determination of our party who pointedly raised questions which related to the welfare of the people, many a grievance which was put off for decades, was brought to light and remedial measures pressed for. I told them what we have done regarding the grievances about the administration of the Forest Department, the differential water rates and in particular the question of re-settlement. I told them how we had carried a resolution, urging that re-settlement should not take place till the principles were codified into Law, and how we had subsequently passed a resolution advocating the principle of permanent settlement and how the matter has now been pending before the Government of India. I told them further, Sir, what we have tried to do in the matter of adjusting the inequalities in regard to the representation of different communities both in the honorary and in the stipendiary offices of Government, and how in some instances, through no fault of our own through no lack of either the will or the effort on our part, it was

unfortunately true that in spite of G. O's. we were not able to make much headway, and I told them further, Sir, that if they were keen on this question of communal representation, they could only get what they wanted in the next council by returning the party which stands emphatically for it. I told them a great many more things, relating to the achievements of the party, which I have not the time here to recapitulate. I told my audience at Trichinopoly, Sir, that we of the party who have worked for the cause of every community in the Legislative Council, we who have born silently the odium of being called retrograde, of being described as anti-national and conservative by our political opponents, that we ask for no other favour at the hands of our non-Brahmin countrymen, ask for no greater reward from them, desire no greater consideration at their hands, than that they should make themselves acquainted with our work in the councils. Read the proceedings of the Legislative Councils, and make yourselves acquainted with the work of our party and our Ministers and try to think for yourselves whether we have done well or ill. We do not ask you to do anything more than that you should follow our work and form your opinions whether national cause and national progress was facilitated by us or not. Do not take your opinions ready made from the prejudiced columns of either the reactionary or the nationalist press. You have sent us to the councils and if you feel that we owe a duty to you, we do. But you, Sir, in common fairness to us owe us a duty as well; you have functions to discharge; you have a responsibility to fulfill, which is to keep in touch with the progress and follow our proceedings; to be alive to our work and to appreciate or condemn us according to your independent judgment Do not merely take the opinions of biased persons and mischievous interpreters. In the name of all that is fair, do not listen to rumours or hearsay and condemn the work of the councils. Go to the very sources and satisfy yourself whether what you hear is true or not. That is what I told my audience at Trichinopoly, and I repeat the same request to my friends here. How many, I ask, in this audience have

troubled to read the proceedings in the Legislative Council? How many have come here ready to condemn the "Justice" Party, because an unscrupulous scribe in a so-called nationalist paper chooses to throw mud at us, at the party and at its leaders? How many of you have attempted to verify the statements made in what is obviously a hostile press, and is it fair, is it just, is it proper, is it what I should expect from you the non-Brahmins, to condemn our own men merely because you happen to read, here and there, adverse criticisms which are almost inevitably clouded by prejudices and marred by lack of verisimilitude?

THE BILLS THROWN OUT

Sir, I have given you an idea of what I told my audience at Trichinopoly, regarding the positive work that was done by our party. I shall place before you tonight another aspect of our work, an aspect which I make bold to say is at least as important as the one which I have just now recapitulated, and an aspect by which our interest for the masses and our anxiety to promote national cause could be tested as readily and as surely as by any other means. It is not merely what is done by the party, as what is prevented from being done, that is of the highest importance. We have to be judged certainly by the positive work which we have been able to accomplish, but we have to be judged equally by the harm which we have prevented by the rights of the villagers which we have thwarted from being lost, and by the prevention of those burdens which, but for us, would have fallen on the ryot, on the agriculturist and on the masses. In discussing this aspect of the case, the three Bills which the Legislative Council has thrown out, prominently comes to my mind. You are aware, Gentlemen, of the agitation that has been going on, for the increase of the pay of the Village Officers, and I believe that some of you at least will be aware that we have passed a resolution in the Legislative Council urging that the salaries of these officers should be suitably increased. The Hon'ble the Revenue

Member, in accordance with our wishes, thought of giving effect to these proposals by levying an additional cess, and brought forward his two famous Bills, the Village Officers Cess Bill and the Proprietary Officers Cess Bill, according to both of which a cess was intended to be levied on the Villagers, the proceeds thereof being utilised for the pay of the Village Officers. We, Sir, as the party representing the mass ot the people, felt that, however anxious we may be to improve the position and pay of the village officers, we could not be a party to a legislation which attempted to increase the already heavily loaded burden of the tax-payer, and we took the unusual step, but that was the only step left to us as champions of the people, of throwing out both the measures at the very first reading. I ask those who say we are not interested in the cause of the people, those critics who tell you that we in the council merely emphasise the decisions of the Government and that we have never shown ourselves to be free or independent, I ask these gentlemen, to say whether this conduct of ours is an example of our lack of independence, and whether this is an act which is dictated by a policy of subservience to the bureaucrat. It is easy to make criticisms; it is easy to pose as a martyr and to make out that your opponent is not actuated by those high principles which are supposed to actuate you. But the acid test must be applied before you can really say who is the patriot and who the renegade, who is the independent man, and who the subservient slave.

Lest there should be any misunderstanding, I hasten to add, gentlemen, that we were able to find enough in our budget to provide for the revision of the salary of these village officers.

THE IRRIGATION BILL

Another instance, to illustrate how we have preserved the rights of the people and fought against legislation which was intended to deprive them of their existing privileges, is our attitude on the Irrigation Bill. That measure has been so much the subject of criticism in the Press, ane has led to what has been supposed to be a

constitutional crisis. I hope you will pardon me, if I dwell at some length on the subject. We have been criticised as having played into the hands of the Zamindar class, as having betrayed the cause of the people and of having guillotined a measure which would have brought the millenium to the agriculturist. Two different organs which view the political problems of the country from two different and diametrically opposite points of view have combined together to make these charges against us. One, the mouthpiece of the die-hard element, the other, the exponent of the perfervid national cause. They have taken us to task for our supposed callousness to the interests of the people, and have even ventured to suggest that the electorate should mark their sense of displeasure by not returning us to the councils in the coming elections. I am willing to accept the challenge that has been thrown out from two such different sources. I am willing to go before the country on this question of the Irrigation Bill and abide by the decision of my electorate.

THE ANGLO-INDIAN ORGAN

The Anglo-Indian organ I may safely leave out of reckoning,for, in spite of its lurid head-lines, its glaring catch phrases and its sensational announcements, in spite of its hysteric appeals to the country and to the people I know what little influence it has on my countrymen.

THE NATIONALIST PRESS

But I should like to take more serious notice of the writings in the nationalist press both because they are more generally read by my country-men, and because their attitude on this particular measure has revealed them in all their nakedness as unabashed exponents of oligarchy on the one hand and communalism on the other, and it has revealed the fact that as political opponents a sense of fair-play is not their strongest characteristic. The nationalist press, if you had followed its writings at the time, advised His Excellency the Governor, descending for oncefrom the high dignity of non-co-operating with a Satanic Govern-

ment to dissolve the council, because it had thrown out a Government measure. We were quite willing to take up the challenge and to go before the country, for a vote of confidence on ourselves, and it was one of our greatest disappointments when we found that His Excellency the Governor was not prepared to favour this advice. We could have found no better rallying cry to face our electors with, than the cry that we had been turned out of office for defeating a government measure, which was calculated to do the greatest injury for the cause, alike, of the landlord and of the tenant, of the humble ryot and of the proprietor. For what is this Irrigation Bill? Every one of its clauses was written, as my friend Mr. Thanikachalla Chettiar picturesquely put it, "with a pen dipped in blood." Section 6 was a confiscatory clause. Section 7 upset the considered decisions of the Privy Council itself. Section 8 unduly interfered with the proprietorship of the Zamindars in their water sources.

KUDIMARAMATH

The provision of Kudimaramath reminded one of the days of the Moghul and Tartar Government and not of a constitutional British Government. The provision about achakatoos was calculated to do the greatest damage to the poor ryot. So was every section and clause in the most Draconian of all recent Bills. I need cite no better evidence of the correctness of the position that we took with regard to the Bill, than the proceedings of the Committee which recently sat at Ootacamund to consider this very Irrigation Bill. The alterations that have been proposed by the committee as seen from the reports published in the daily press during the sittings, revealed the fact that the very basic principles of the Bill were radically unsound, and that it was a measure which could not have been mended in the Select Committee. What other course was open to us but to take, what I admit to be the unusual of step, to throw it out at the very first reading in the interests of the people whom we were representing. I appeal to you, gentlemen, to say whether we were right in our decision to reject the measure whose

principles were unsound, whose provisions were so confiscatory and which was so one-sided and drafted with such utter disregard for the rights of others, that it may safely be said to be a measure which had but one principle running through it, that every right should be vested in the Government, and every privilege taken away from the people- I am confident, gentlemen, that you will endorse our decision, and express your emphatic approval of our conduct. (Cries of "Yes, Yes.")

THE MINISTERS' ATTITUDE

Let me, however, take you to the other aspect of the criticism which appeared in connection with the Irrigation Bill and show to you the utter unscrupulousness with which a hostile and partisan press has criticised us and our Ministers. If you had read the leaders in the Nationalist Press at the time, you would have noticed that a very serious charge was levelled against our Ministers, of having supported in private in the Cabinet, the Irrigation Bill and of having betrayed an honourable colleague by not supporting it in the open council. From what esoteric sources they obtained this information, and how they could pretend to reveal to the world the proceedings of the Cabinet which were veiled in the strictest secrecy, is a problem I do not pretend to explain now. The three Ministers on the voting of this Bill remained neutral and those of you who know the constitutional position would realise, that if this meant anything at all it meant that the Ministerial half was not in agreement with the Reserved half over the Bill, and yet the nationalists had extraordinary sources of information negativing these natural inferences, and inspired articles took our Ministers to task and roundly rated them for having betrayed an honourable colleague.

GROSS AND UNMITIGATED UNTRUTHS

I consider this, Sir, as one of the most serious charges that could be levelled against any politician. I am, therefore, anxious to see whether there is any truth in

these allegations. If you or I for a moment were satisfied that there was any justification for these charges we would certainly have to revise our ideas of political decorum. What are the facts, however? I am in a position to tell you that the statements in these journals were gross and unmitigated untruths.

A CAMPAIGN OF LIES

In its campaign of lies the nationalist press has not spared itself and the necessities of under-hand political warfare led it to make aspersions which it cannot for a moment substantiate. It knows full well that, whatever hints it may throw out as regards the Cabinet decisions, our Ministers were muzzled and were not in a position to deny the allegations or clear themselves by revealing Cabinet secrets and our nationalist contemporary took full advantage of this fact and attacked our Ministers for the inconsistant attitude that they were supposed to have taken. Fortunately for us, gentlemen, we have a generous-minded Governor who would not allow his colleagues to be so unfairly abused and it is, thanks to his sense of fairness, that we have an insight into what really took place. His Excellency, in his speech in proroguing the council on the 3rd of April, stated emphatically and in the clearest language that he felt bound to say in fairness to his Ministers, that they had made it quite clear to His Excellency and the other members of the Government that they felt considerable doubt whether they would get a majority for the Bill on its introduction, and His Excellency added, that he took the fullest responsibility to go forward with the measure. Now, gentlemen, that is a categorical denial of the aspersions of this newspaper and put an end to all doubts in the matter.

WHY DID NOT THE NATIONALIST ORGAN APOLOGISE

What would you expect of a decent journal when the facts are placed before it? I am anxious to be as fair as possible to my political opponents. I am willing to concede even, that this journal was probably misinformed by

somebody on whom it had depended for its information, and that, as in the case of Mr. Das, those that had briefed it had not the highest notions about ethics. I am willing, as I said, to concede all these, in fairness, to a political opponent. But what is the subsequent attitude of this great nationalist paper? One would have expected it, as a fair and decent journal, to have come out with an apology and expressed its regret for the mis-statements which were proved by the word of the first gentleman in the presidency, to have been wrongly and unjustifiably made about our Ministers. Would you not have expected that common decency, common nations of honesty and fairness, would have induced the nationalist organ to have publicly recalled its statements and the insinuation that it was pleased to make when it was misguided. But no, the non-Brahmins and their ministers cannot be fought by fair means. The campaign of lies, the method of hitting below the belt, the process of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*, has to be resorted to fight the non-Brahmins.

NATIONALISTS, ADVICE TO THE GOVERNOR

The advice that the Nationalist press gave to the authorities at the time, is even more curious and reveals the cloven hoof more effectively, for what was it that they advocated when they found an elected majority of the people throwing out a Government measure? That his Excellency should dissolve the Council and order the formation of a new council! With all the bitterness that one is accustomed to in political work, with all the insincerities that one is prepared for in the Nationalist press, with the knowledge that, behind this veneer of patriotism of the nationalists, there runs a deep vein of retrograde and hopelessly conservative instinct in these exponents of democracy, with all this one was not prepared for this extraordinary proposal of dissolving the council which the nationalists put forward. I am reminded, gentlemen, of the great autocracy of the days of Oliver Cromwell when Parliament was dissolved time after time to give place to an assembly more in consonance

with the autocrat and better prepared to carry out his dictations. But that an Oliver Cromwell should occupy the editorial chair of the nationalist press, was a contingency which even I was absolutely unprepared for. I ask you, gentlemen, you who can think independently whether a worse suggestion could have possibly been made than that an elected assembly should be dissolved for not carrying out the proposals of an irremoveable executive. You know, Sir, that they are just beginning to develop responsible Government and the very fundamental basis of responsible Government is the prevailing of the wish of the majority. If you believe in a democratic Government, if you are sincere in your talk about national advancement and liberalism in politics, you ought to concede that a legislative assembly has got as much right to do the right thing as to do the wrong. The ultimate sanction behind it was, and could only be, the will of the people. The voice of the electorate asserted itself in the elections through their representatives Which constitutionalist, which seeker after liberty, which paragon of public rights, would have dreamt of asking the Governor to whip the members out of the council, merely because they had not done what was expected of them, and is it for the nationalist press, for those who have been preaching against conservatism, for those who have been pointing the finger of scorn at us as persons depending upon a Government's will and pleasure, is it for these people to suggest to the Governor this most retrograde and reactionary of all proposals. If you had for a moment thought that we had done this disservice to the country by rejecting the bill, was it not open to you to go before the country, and ask for a vote of censure on our conduct, and instead of doing the most obvious and the only constitutional thing possible, you the nationalists, you the fire-eating liberals, go whining on bended knees before the Governor, and ask him to dissolve the council—a most dangerous and degrading precedent, which if His Excellency had followed would have effectively ruined the reforms. Is this your belief in the maxim "*vox populi vox dei*? Is this your faith in the will of the people? Is

it one thing when the non-Brahmin party is in power and quite another when you yourselves hope to be in power. Like the Lord Chancellor's foot, is one's political conscience to vary according to the party which commands the majority in the council? I make a present of this dignified specimen of nationalist independence to those of my friends who speak of the non-Brahmin party as wanting either in nationalism or in independence.

THE RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS BILL

I am afraid, gentlemen, I have wearied your patience and transcended my time limit. I hope on another occasion to speak to you at greater length about such subjects, and I hope to show to you how even in our conduct in connection with the non-co-operation movement and the treatment of political prisoners, we have kept steadfastly to the principles, of doing the greatest good to the greatest number, of promoting peace and order without unduly infringing individual rights or individual liberty, and of safeguarding the nation against its evil geniuses, whether they be Indians or foreigners. There is one other subject, however, which I should like to speak about especially to the Tanjore audience and that is the measure which we shortly hope to place on the Statute Book, the Hindu Religious Endowments Bill, you are all aware of the criticisms, that have recently appeared in the newspapers, of the false cry of religion in danger that has been so often raised and has been repeated to day, and of the pathos that is being given expression to, in the memorials which, to our shame, some educated men are concerned in promoting against the measure. 1 have not got the time, gentlemen, to go into the history of this bill. It will require separate treatment by itself, and it will occupy a whole lecture, but let me assure you as one who had an opportunity of studying a great deal of the literature concerned, with the subject as one who has followed the history of this question from the year 1790 downwards, as one who has seen and read the opinions of some of our famous citizens

in the past. Let me assure you, gentlemen, that the man who has raised his voice and protested against the measure, can neither be a real Hindu nor a very religious man. You are probably aware that in ancient India numbers of these institutions were being managed by our Rajas, and that when the British came into power as a ruling race the state management fell into disuse to the great regret of the Hindu public, and to the utter ruination of the temples themselves.

THE HON'BLE JOHN COMPANY'S ACTION

If you had followed the history of these institutions, you would have seen that things came to such a crisis, that the late East India Company had to step into the shoes of our ancient Kings and from the year 1790 began the process which continued to the year 1840, of the company taking over the management of these religious institutions wherever they found mismanagement or malfeasance. This state management did not entail any interference with the religion. It did not mean that foreigners could step into the temple and take charge of its ritual but that through Hindu officials alone the property of these institutions should be safeguarded. Its rituals and ceremonies, its customs and usages, remain unchanged and unaltered. But a different policy was dictated by the Home Government, thanks to the pressure which the Christian missionaries brought to bear upon the company, when they saw that so long as institutions like the great shrine of Sri Venkatashwara on the Tirupati could attract year in and year out pilgrims whose devotion and religious fervour was proof against the blandishments and allurements of an alien faith, so long will there be no hope for their attempt at proselytising the high caste Hindus. In spite of the vehement protests of the Government of India and of the local Governments, and of the innumerable Collectors, the old Hailbury civilians whose conscience was roused by this cruel policy, which, they rightly foresaw, would naturally result in destroying these institutions,—the Home Government forced its policy, which had to be carried out by the Government

of India ; and so it came to pass that in 1842, the religious institutions all over the land were handed over to private agencies, in most cases with no possible connection to the institutions themselves.

A WAIL OF PROTEST

Would you be surprised to learn that the Hindu community of that date sent a wail of protest against this cruel policy, that the most orthodox of our countrymen, the most pious of the Hindu devotees, the jeeangars of Tirupati, the holy men at Conjeeveram, the sanctified priests at Ramesvaram joined in this cry. From 1842 to 1863 this policy of handing over the institutions resulted in such serious misappropriation of trust properties, that the Government of India was itself forced to make provision for the better control of these endowments and passed the Act of 1863. The subsequent history must be fairly familiar to all.

THE OLD BILLS

The bills of Mr. Vembakkam Rama Iyengar, Sir T. Muthuswami Iyer, Sir V. Bhashyam Iyengar, Dewan Bahadur Reghunatha Rao, Sir Sankaran Nair, Chetoval Rao and Mr. Anandacharlu must be within your knowledge and it is a matter of deep congratulation that after nearly 60 years of strenuous fight put forward by the greatest and best of our countrymen, we, the non-Brahmins, thanks to the grit and determination, the persuasive powers of our Chief Minister, have been able to pass a measure of such a magnitude calculated to do so much good to the cause of the Hindu religion itself. If you compare the bill of Sir T. Muthuswami Iyer with the present measure, you will be surprised to find that the former bill was very much more drastic than the present and contemplated greater control of these institutions. That is very shortly the history of this legislation. And Sir, what are we to think of those publicists, those political reformers, who suggest that this measure is an ill-advised one and what is far more interesting than this, appeal to the Viceroy to exercise his powers of veto.

VETOING UNJUSTIFIED

You all heard, gentlemen, of the certification of the Salt Tax by His Excellency the Viceroy which has aroused the deepest indignation all over the country and which has been described as the death-knell to the cause of Reforms. That the Salt Tax Bill defeated by a large majority of our contrymen should be restored by the Viceroy, ignoring the wishes of the elected representatives of the country, is undoubtedly a disastrous step, for His Excellency to take; but there was at least this supposed justification, to be pleaded in favour of it, that in all countries taxation is most unpopular, and that the necessity of balancing the budget and stabilising the financial position of the country forced the Viceroy to take the odium of additional taxation from the elected representatives, who are shortly to face their electorates, on to his own broad shoulders. But, what justification could there be for the Viceroy to veto a measure, dealing with a subject practically concerning Indians, passed by a majority of Indian legislators, brought forward by a Hindu member, relating to a transferred subject which is supposed to be—exclusively under the control of a provincial Government? And is it for the constitutionalists who speak so much about popular freedom and individual right, is it for the hypernationalists who speak of India made safe for democracy, is it for the Swarajists who are so anxious to have complete Home Rule, to appeal from the decision of an elected body of the representatives of the people to an irresponsible executive head? If we had done wrong, if we had not reflected the will of the people in passing this legislation, if we had carried out the measure merely to please our Ministers and betrayed the interest of our representatives, there are the elections coming and what better case can our political opponents have to oust us from our seats? Is it not for them to go before the country and to plead that those who have supported the measure should be unseated, and that those who would promise to have the measure repealed should alone be sent in, and in a transferred

subject even if the Viceroy gave his consent and the bill is placed on the Statute, if the country is behind it in your cry, you have only to see to it that the representatives of the new councils pass a resolution urging on the Minister the necessity of withholding the giving effect to the Act. You have your desire fulfilled and the Religious Endowments Act becomes inoperative. But instead of these straightforward methods which if pursued would show you up as hollow and insincere, which would have revealed that the country was emphatically behind us and not with you, which would establish that we have carried out the wishes of the electorate in getting this measure passed, you take to under-hand and devious means. Your champions of ancient right go and wait on bended knees before His Excellency the Viceroy. Your leaders of democratic parties lead deputations on behalf of vested interests and in spite of the great bogus cry of nationalists, you who call yourselves the friends of Swadeshis are not ashamed to get an outsider to help you in your insidious attempts to thwart the will of the public. The agitation for the vetoing of the Bill, backed up as it has been by the Swarajists and the non-co-operators, is the best illustration of the hypocrisy of our political extremists. I am fairly certain, gentlemen, that statesmanship of a Viceroy like Lord Reading will stand proof to these attempts. One word more and I have done. I have given you the message of our leader. You in Tanjore, I know, will respect that message and will exert yourself, now as before, to see that our cause is vindicated and strengthened by the representatives whom you will shortly send to the councils." (Cheers.)

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